

LITTLE FOLK LIFE SERIES



LOLLY DINK'S
DOINGS

MRS R. H. STODDARD

WILLIAM F. GILL & CO.

151 WASHINGTON ST. BOSTON.

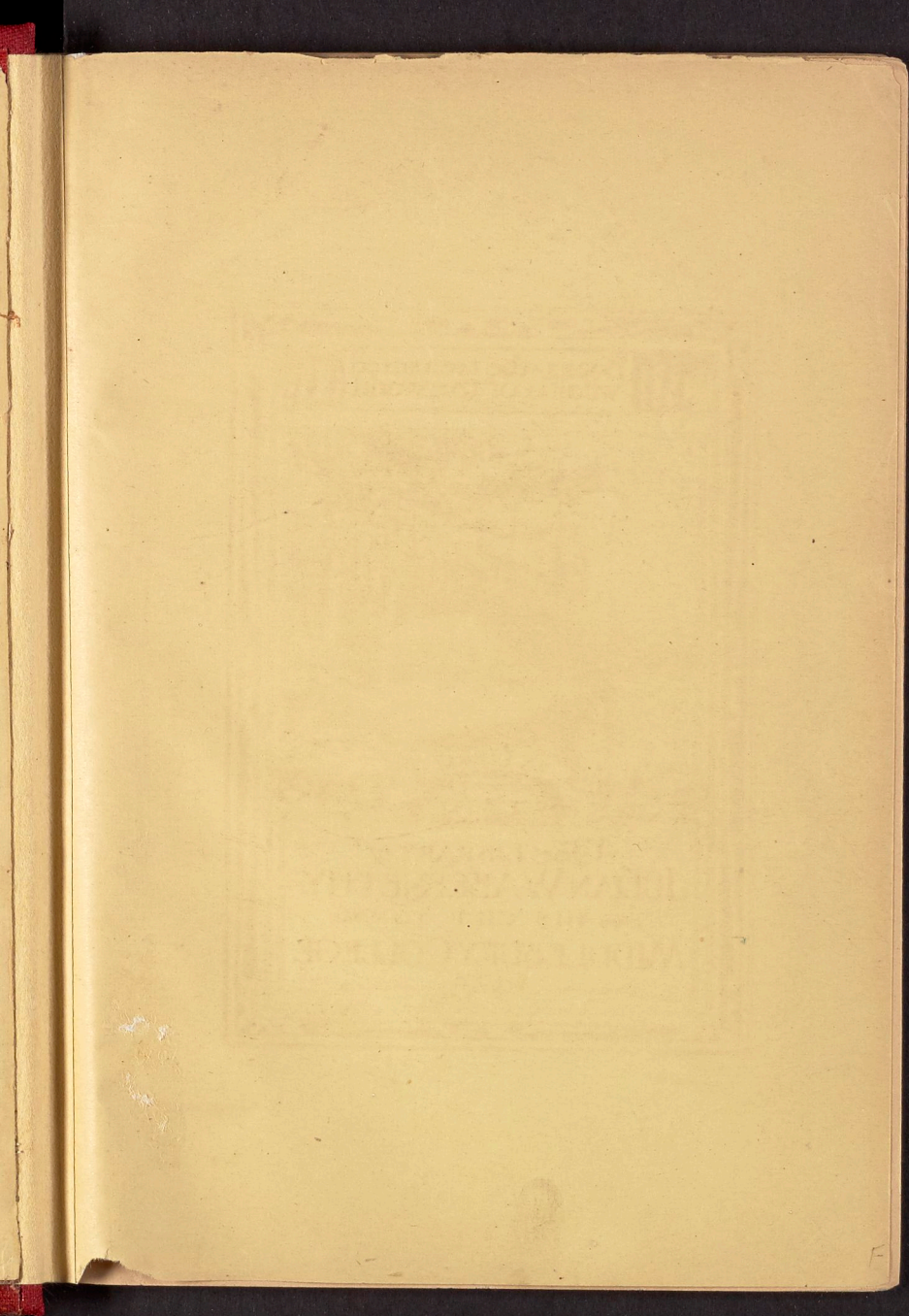


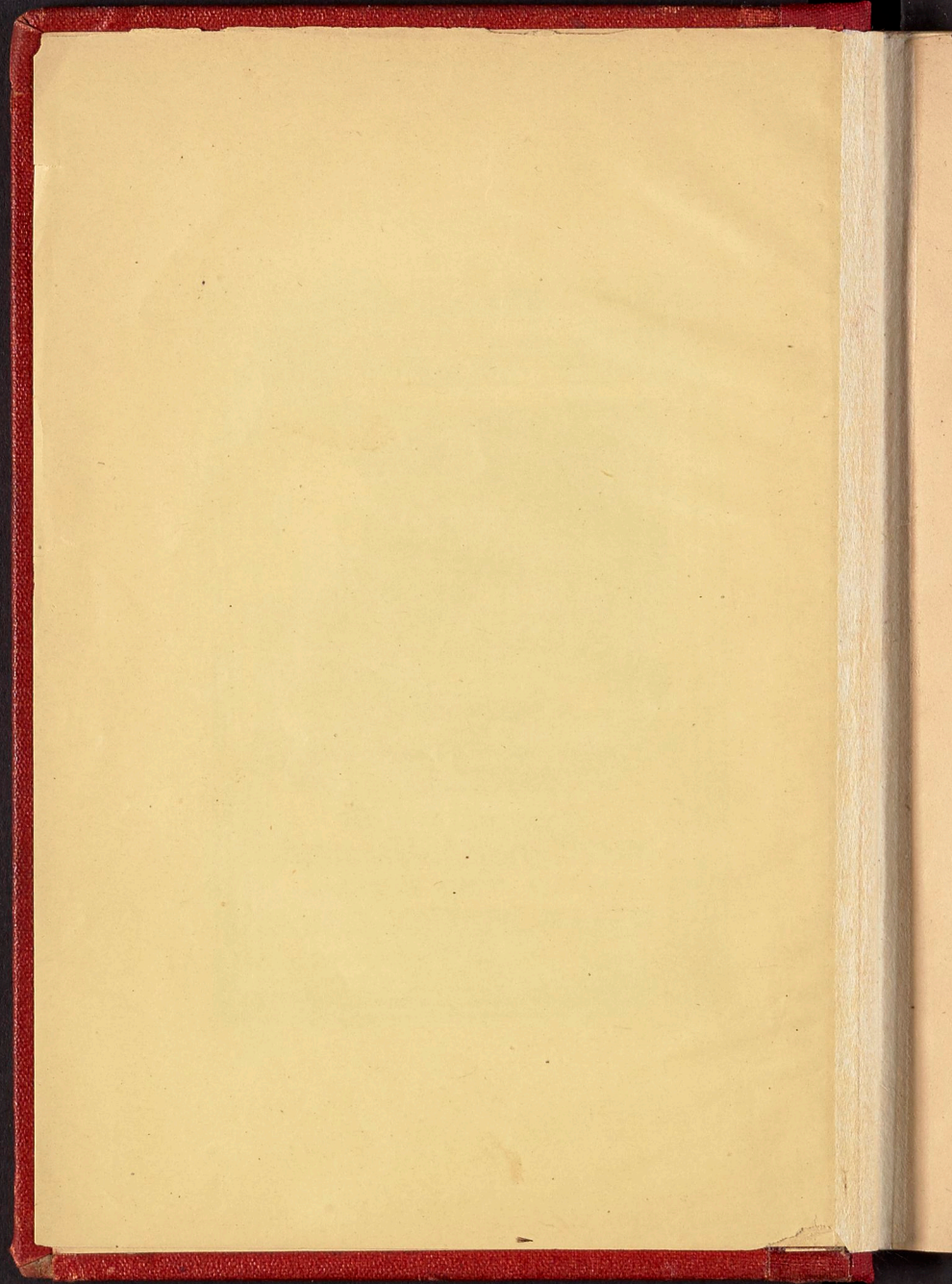
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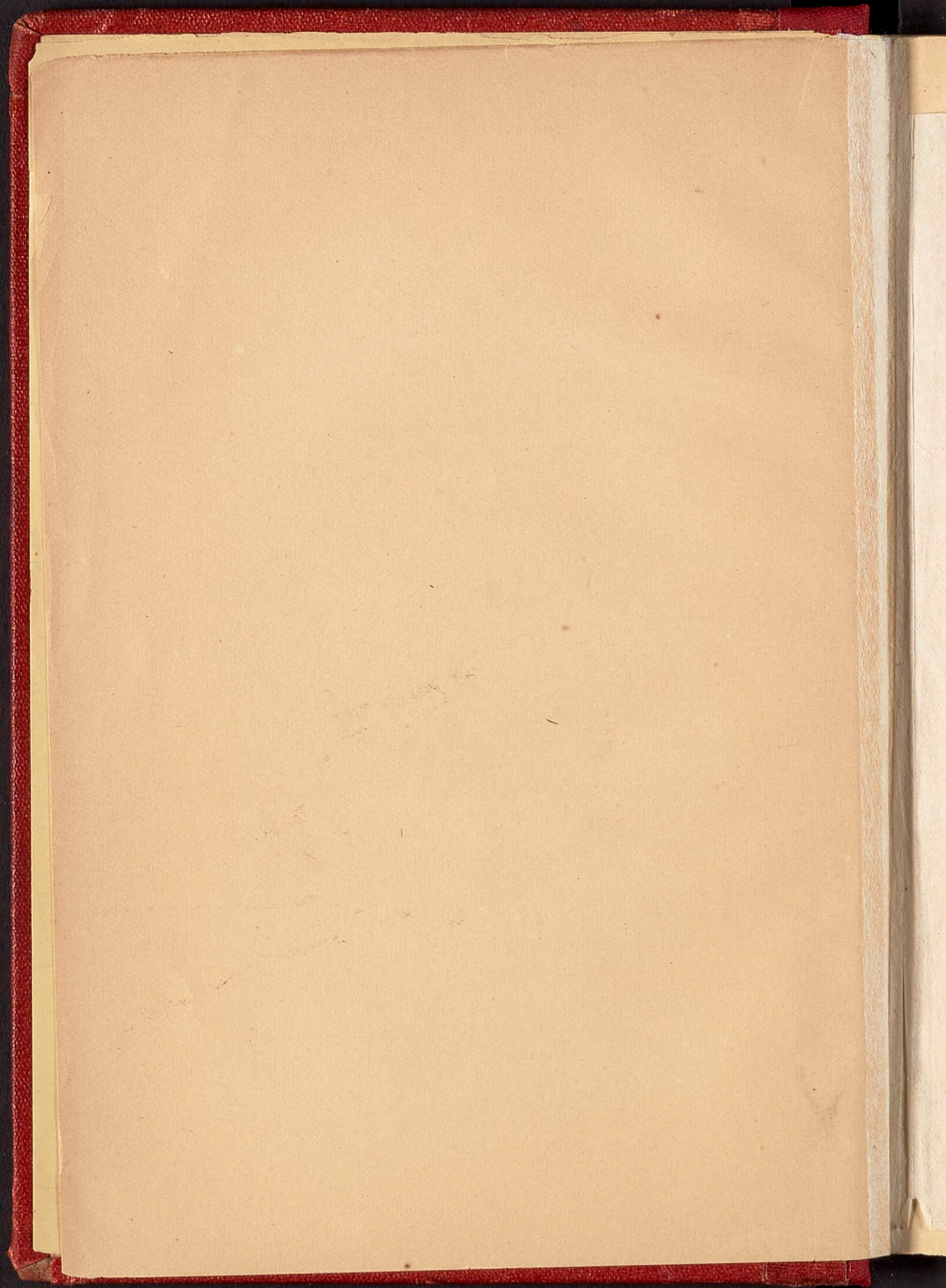


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THE FOLK LIFE
SERIES



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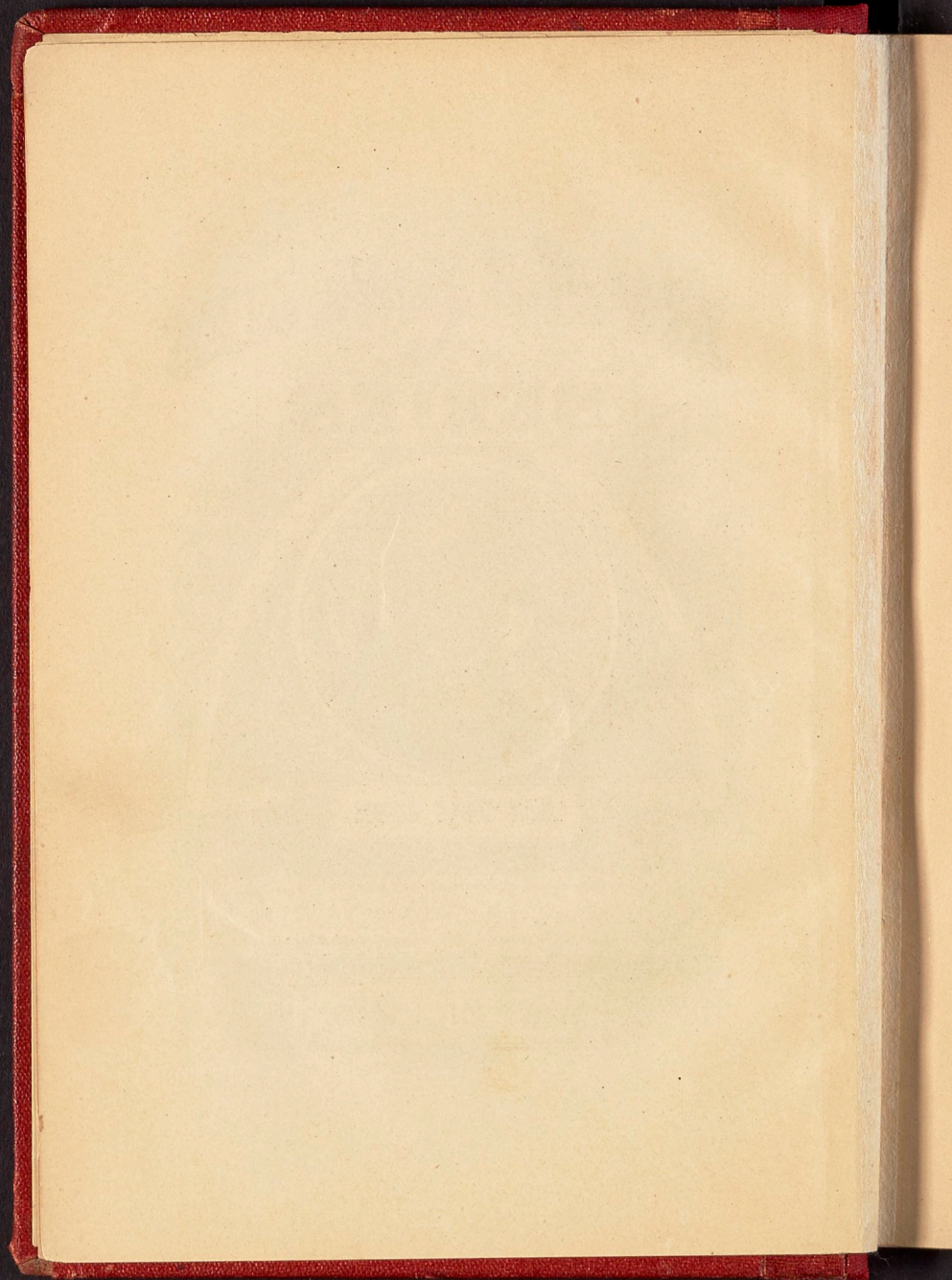
LET THE FOLK LIVE
SERIES



LOLLY DINKS' DOINGS

✻ MRS. R. H. STODDARD ✻

✻ Wm. F. GILL & Co. ✻



LOLLY DINKS'S DOINGS.

BY HIS MOTHER, OLD MRS. DINKS,

Alias

ELIZABETH STODDARD.



BOSTON:

WILLIAM F. GILL AND COMPANY,

(Successors to the old stand of Shepard & Gill),

151 WASHINGTON STREET.

1874.

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LOLLY DINKS'S DOINGS.

CHAPTER I.

LOLLY DINKS is my son, six years old: he is continually doing something, and all his doings amaze me. Sometimes I call him Dinks, and sometimes Lolly. When he is naughty I do not call him by either name. A rod, a birch, smell as sweet (and sweeter to my friends who observe him), than the name of my sweet prickly rosebud, Lolly Dinks. When he grows *too* bad I let him alone: his capers, and the crooked words that come out of his little coral lips, hurt me so that I have to

wrap my feelings in brown paper and vinegar, and drop tears in my handkerchief. Large, limpid, salt tears are mine, and Lolly Dinks watches every one; but he pushes his feet, and pretends to look away into China, say; and I hear him mutter,

“*I don’t care if you do cry. What’s your crying to me, I should like to know? Does it wet my eyes one smitch?*”

But Lolly Dinks does care. Presently I feel something heavy at the back of my chair. I keep my eyes shut. Then comes against my face a hard little head, covered with hair that smells just like new hay, and is like it, too; and wee fingers pull at *my* hair; and a pair of rose-leaf lips creep over my nose, and my chin, and my ears; and in my ears Lolly Dinks says softly,

“Take me on your lap, and tell me a story.”

“Do I feel the fingers and the lips of a bad boy, or a good boy?” I ask.

“Tell the story, and I will be good. I *must* grow bad, if I don't hear all the time about giants, ogres, and crocodiles. If you don't tell me in a minute, you will be a *nasty* mother, and all *boys* will hate you.”

Oh, naughty, darling Lolly Dinks! Having said these dreadful words, he looks at me like a crafty rascal of a bird, standing on one leg, and eying me sideways. I remain silent, and reflect upon boys. It seems to me that all other boys behave better than Lolly Dinks behaves. When they visit him, how meek and still they are! They say “*If you please,*” and “*Thank you,*” and, “*Will you allow us to turn somersets on your bed?*” and “*Could you be so kind as to give us a drink?*” They eat with their forks, while Lolly Dinks eats with his fingers. Their hair does not stick up all over their little respectable skulls as his does. He yells, “*I wont eat bread and butter ; I'll only eat*

jelly;" and they say, "*We had rather not eat bread and butter; we prefer jelly.*"

I think, "Oh that somebody else's boys were my boys!" All at once I stop thinking, for here Lolly Dinks is in my lap, and I am kissing him like any thing; and I begin a story right off, which he listens to as still as a mouse, a pretty smile on his lips, and his eyes as bright as diamonds. This is the way I begin, and this is going to be the story: though for the life of me I cannot see that it is much of a story; and all the editors, and the publishers, and the readers, and everybody but Lolly Dinks, will see as I do.

"Lolly, once upon a time,"

Immediately I am interrupted.

"Mother!" Lolly Dinks shrieks. "*Once!* You said that before. I am going to have ten thousand monkeys in it, or not a single thing besides."

Now I grow in earnest. I squeeze his hands,
I frown, I begin again,

“Child, what is there in daylight to make
children so restless, so peevish, so unloving, so
exacting? The angel of darkness, as he waves
his downy, raven wings over them when they
go to bed, must be a lovely spirit. How beau-
tiful the children become in this angel’s pres-
ence! He has large, palish-green eyes” —

“Does he wink, mother?” interrupts Lolly
Dinks again.

“Yes, Lolly Dinks, he winks. Every wink
is a dream which travels through your sleeping
mind.”

“Well, mother, I do see a light in my shut
eyes; but it must be a fairy gas that makes
every thing so bright. Go on, mother.”

“‘Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier,’

from dream to dream, Lolly Dinks, in your little mite of a mind. I mean to have you understand that when you are awake in the night, when you call out from your bed, begging to come into mine for just five minutes, how good, how gentle, how loving you are, in the shadow of the angel of darkness. I hear no naughty word from you, I see no ugly pouting lip; your white feet do not angrily stamp at me, your white hands are not doubled in anger against me.

“‘Mother,’ you say, ‘I love you a worldful.’ ‘Mother, I must kiss you.’ ‘Mother, will you hold my hands?’ ‘Mother, may I always be your king-baby, your little royal son?’ ‘I’ll never grow too big to hug you, mother dear.’”

At this period of my continuous story Lolly Dinks himself winks; but as it is in the daylight, and the angel of darkness is still far away, just leaving behind him the wall of

China, which all people know is directly underneath Broadway, he again says, "Go on. Give me an ogre, or a crocodile."

"Lolly, once upon a time in Egypt a fat crocodile lived, 'the smallest of his kin;' that is, his tail was not as long as his father's tail was, and his miserable paws were not as wide as his mother's paws were. Still he was fat; and every hip-po-pot-a-mus hated Crocky, who was only to blame for one thing. Crocky had a dreadful appetite: he bit every thing, and what he did not spit out of his mouth, which was half a yard long, he swallowed. He bit the legs of boys; he bit the boats that floated on the river where his mud-crib was; he bit the lily-leaves, and they puckered up his mouth so, for they were bitter, that his mother said she was afraid he could never say *Memnon* again; and Crocky said,

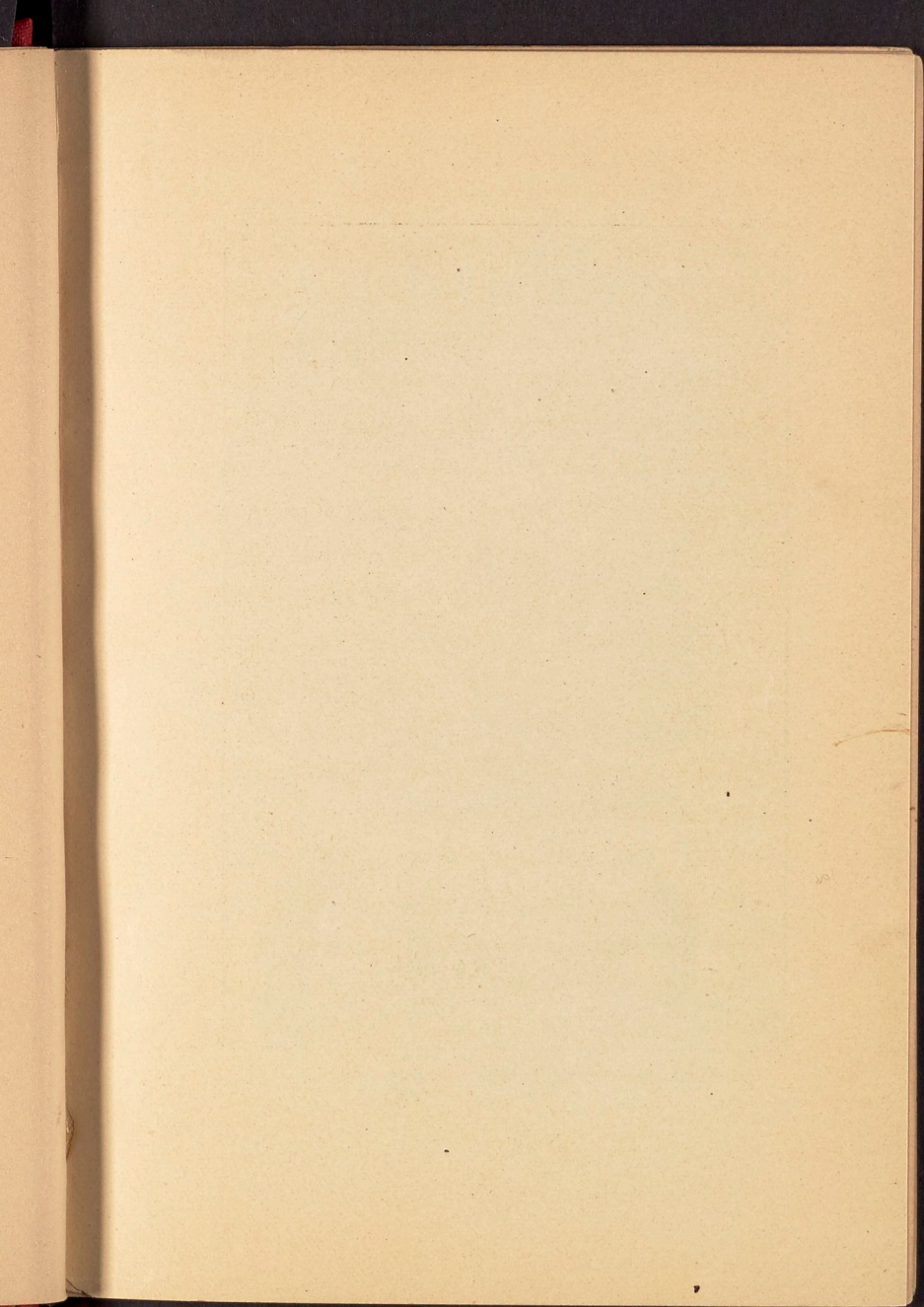
"'What do I care for Memmum? I ain't a-going to get up at sunrise to hear him toot.'

“Crocky would have bitten into the tops of the palm-trees that grew near his native river ; but crocodiles cannot climb trees, and so he pretended that he never could a-bear sauerkraut. Well, Crocky had a friend, a bird named Crick-crack ! Lolly Dinks, can you believe that a fat crocodile, with a big mouth, little ugly eyes, and oh ! such a skin, black, dirty, and rough, could have a bird friend ? Our Crocky had one, though ; and what do you think the bird did ? He picked his teeth for him !”

“Why didn’t Crocky buy a tooth-pick at Delmonico’s ?” asked Lolly Dinks.

“He could not paddle over the red sand, my Dinks. His paws were short, his eyes were weak : besides, he was afraid of a sand-storm.”

“There’s no such thing as a sand-storm. Go on, mother : tell me more about the bird,” ordered Lolly Dinks.





"Crick-Crack darted into his wide jaws and picked
it out." Page 13.

“Crick-crack was brown and little, and ate the flies swarming round Crocky’s long head and snout; but there is not much more to tell. Crick-crack also sat on Crocky’s head; and when his meat or his fish or his vegetables got between his teeth, Crick-crack darted into the wide jaws, and picked it out. This was when Crocky was swimming or floundering about for food. * At other times Crocky hid himself in mud, and rested, as he said. But that was not true; he just covered himself up, in the hope that somebody or something might come close to him, thinking it was about to climb a mud heap, and when it got over the top of his ugly snout, that he could open his awful jaws, and eat it into hash. He staid and staid, day after day, night after night, first on one side of the river, and then on the other; and nobody and nothing came. The sun was so hot it baked the mud hard all

round him, and he could not shake it off: his head ached, his paws grew sore, his tail got numb. Then he cried. Crocodile tears are different from people's tears. They are shiny and thick like mucilage; and father and mother crocodiles, and all the crocodiles in Egypt, do not believe in them. So nobody believed that poor Crocky was crying. His friend Crick-crack had been called away to lay a couple of spotted eggs as big as an olive, on the top of a yellow column, where a cunning little bush grew; and of course Crick-crack knew that if Crocky was mud-baked there could be no meat in his teeth, and that the flies had all moved into the next village, where some Arab men lived, with red legs, who wore white night-gowns in the daytime, and every now and then bumped their heads, crying out, '*Muzzein, Muzzein.*'

“At last Crocky died; and when Crick-crack

came back one day to lunch with him, and the flies returned to take a nap, all that they could find was a mud heap as long and as wide as Crocky was when they left him. Crick-crack did not speak to the flies, the flies did not speak to Crick-crack; and they all went on their way, thinking how mean Crocky had been to desert them in this way, saying to themselves, 'Crocodiles are always just so, in the mud or out: they will die, and forget *us*.'

"Is this all, mother?" inquires Lolly Dinks.

"There never was another thing said about Crocky after that night. And the sun set red and gold and green, and everybody was happy all over Egypt."

"I don't believe a word of this story," cried Lolly Dinks. "It would have been different if the monkeys had been there."



CHAPTER II.

IT was on a winter morning, while standing before the window of my New-York parlor, cogitating over Dinks material, that I saw a big dim object rolling along the street. "Run, Mr. Dinks," I cried: "I see a creature."

Lolly Dinks rushed from the table, his mouth gilded with boiled egg, and pinafore arabesqued with the same; for it was the hour of breakfast with us.

"I see nothing," said Lolly, "but a gray patch. Is the Snow Queen coming, mother, or is the window dirty?"

The window was unclean. We called Alice, our servant, to come with water to wash off a pane so that we might see *It*.

Old Mr. Dinks, Lolly's papa, read the "Sun" newspaper to make his nerves strong. I washed Lolly's face, and he said, "You needn't stick the towel into my ears to get the egg off my mouth."

All the washing done, we looked out of the window.

We saw a bear in the Fourth Avenue. He was big, and black, and brownish, and tears ran out of his eyes.

"Will that bear hug anybody?" asks Lolly; "and do those men give him honey? Who are the men? Do you like them, mother? I don't. Why does the bear go swing-swong? Must he?"

"He must while he plays bear, and hears the drum bang. He thinks in tune, I believe."

"Mother, I do believe I hear a whizzing: is it the bear's mind that whizzes? Tell me what he thinks."

“ Maybe this, my little Lolly.

‘ Boom, boom, see my doom.

Rat-tat-too ! I must sue

Pennies for a cruel scamp,

And on two legs I must tramp.

Bum-bum ! by the drum.

Soldiers in a bear-skin cap

Tear each other into bits.

’Tis a glory so to fight :

I am beaten if I bite.

I should like to give men fits !

Men are worser than us beasts ;

Lolly in his mother’s lap,

Lolly having daily feasts,

Can he pity me, mayhap ? ” ”

“ Goody, good mother, I know that’s true.”

“ The bear winked at us, and all at once we knew that he was an enchanted prince. In early ages, when the mistletoe-bough hung on all castle-walls, his name was Arter, and he used to wash the teacups of a Druid named

Bel-i-sa-ri-us. He was a good, dirty man; for he lived in the hollow of an old oak-tree which had many acorns. In the fall of the year the acorns fell, and Mr. Ivanhoe's pigs ate them; and so Bel-i-sa-ri-us got dirty. Arter lived in the castle. The teacups — I meant acorn-cups — were taken up to the castle every day, and he washed them in the stone basin in the courtyard. There was not much water in this old basin, but enough for the white pigeons, and Graffenburg, the big wolf-hound, who measured six feet from the tip of his cold, moist nose to the tip of his worn-out brownish tail."

"Is that as tall as a man?" asks Lolly Dinks. "Go on, quick! Arter is passing Stewart's already."

"Well, Arter washed the acorn teacups seven years in a red satin tunic, with a gold border round it. He had long, dark hair, which tossed about like the boughs of a willow-tree in a

storm-wind. He was a strong, handsome boy, and loved his mother better than he did Bel-sa-ri-us the Druid, the white pigeons, and Graffenburg. She never plagued him, never cleaned his nails, never said, '*Come here, Arter, let me look at your teeth;*' or, '*Arter, why have you lost your pocket-handkerchief? This is the second one the page has given you to-day.*'"

"Page!" cries Mr. Dinks: "did they have a page? Oh, how lovely! Go on."

"Lolly Dinks, Arter loved his mother, and she *died*. And" —

"Was the page little, or big?" interrupts Mr. Dinks; "and did he wear a tunic, and white trousers just like his skin? And were his feet covered with yellow boots?"

"The page died the next day, and no one could ever find his clothes: the Druid said they had gone back to their original form, into cobwebs, butterflies' wings, fish-scales, and beetles' backs.

“ Well, at the end of seven years, when Arter was seventeen years old, and his mother had been in another world a year, he grew very cross, very lazy, and loved no one. One day, when the clouds were black, and the whole earth was shaded by them, and every thing in the world looked the same color, Arter went into the woods to carry six acorn-cups he had just washed, and from which he had bitten the edges. The Druid was not under his oak-tree. No noise at all was to be heard. No bird sang, no grasshopper rustled in the grass, no mouse nor mole was creeping about. Arter kneeled down by the tree, and tucked the acorn-cups under some moss; and as he put the last cup down, from behind the trunk of the tree he saw a *Horrible Hairy Paw*, which made him feel as if he should choke. He lifted his head, and a little higher up saw *One Fiery Eye*, round as a cent, with three rings in the eyeball.

"He could not move, and he could not speak. More was to come! Oh dear me! Next, a long black snout crept, crept, close to Arter. It opened; queer words came out of it, and they smelt like rare beefsteak and honey,—a pretty poor kind of a smell, Arter thought.

"These were the words; and soon Arter felt as if there were hairs in his own mouth, but he dared not speak. Oh! where could that clean, kind Bel-i-sa-ri-us have gone to? Lovely, good Druid! Arter would be glad if there were a million acorn-cups to wash! Said Snout, in these words,

"'You are cross, lazy, and you don't love anybody. You must be *changed*. Be a real beast until you see a *Perfect Boy*. And oh! ain't you going to have a time of it in travelling over Europe, Asia, and America? Come here.'

"Down went Arter into the moss. He felt

the bitten edge of an acorn-cup scratch his nose, and that was all. He was drowsy then, still smelling beefsteak and honey. After that he knew he was in the dark. The castle and the pigeons and the Druid seemed a thousand years old, and so far off that they were not more than an inch big. Then a miserable daylight came, and he itched dreadfully: he thought he was going to scratch himself with his hand, and found that it was a *Paw*. He knew, then, that he was a young bear, with his 'troubles all to come.' He was not exactly like other bears, though; for this one idea was in his bear-mind, — he must find a *Perfect Boy*, if he ever wanted to be Prince Arter again. So he left the *Old Creature* who had enchanted him, and went to California. There was no *Perfect Boy* in Sacramento, San Francisco, San José, and the other Sans; and he came to New York, accustomed by this time to bear-being, and

often suffering like a bear. And this is the reason why Mr. Dinks and I heard the whizzing from him. If he had been a cat, it would have sounded like a purring. Cats' purrs are often used in pulling chestnuts out of the fire for the numerous monkeys residing in New York with hand-organs."

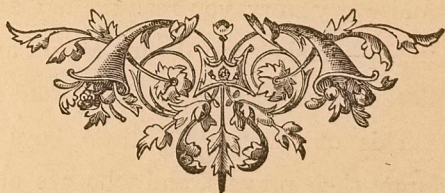
"Mother, I am cheated by your talk," cries Lolly Dinks. "The bear has gone; he is out of sight."

It was true. We looked down the crooked Bowery, and up into Union Square. The statue of Washington couldn't tell a lie, nor the truth either; and we saw no bear, no enchanted prince.

"There is no *Perfect Boy* in our family, that is certain, Lolly Dinks," I said. "If the bear had found him here, we would have given him a party this very evening. He should have had some Ottawa beer, and danced a polka with

Aunt Persimmons. Where, oh! where is the *Perfect Boy*?"

"I guess, Mrs. Mother," said Lolly Dinks, his face all alive with that moral sensitiveness which characterizes him, as all must know who read these truths, "I guess the Perfect Boy for that bear is Barnum's Fat Boy."





CHAPTER III.

MANY books are brought to Mr. Dinks for his instruction, of the sugar-coated pill-order of literature ; but the sugar melts in his mouth, and out comes the pill. “Now, mother dear,” he cries, “this book says, ‘For little dears who go to bed early, and make no fuss ;’ and every story you read me has an accident in it,— makes me dream awful, awful, and holler, and be scared. I don’t want such books. This one says, ‘To little boys who never forget their prayers, and who are always thinking of what their parents wish them to do,’ and there’s nothing in it but fights of the Israelites. Take ’em off, and make up something just like real life ; only it must be all true

fairy life, — impossible things that ought to be, you know, my marmy. No more old stories like these in the bookcase. Hey, aint it spring? I must go to the country. The buttercups are ripe enough to hold under my chin; and the sun is golden enough to show the whole sky how *it* loves butter."

"Every thing is an old story, Lolly dear."

"Older than all your explanations?"

"The same age. Will you go to Massachusetts, where the hermit-crab roves the beach in the most sensible Yankee way, in somebody else's house? Oh, we will go, my son!"

"Where the hermit-crabs are," he mused.

"Don't you remember I found one on the beach in a yellow shell, and he nipped my hand with his claw; and you said it was cunning in him to find a hand of his own size to nip? Will Papa Dinks go, too, and catch the hermit-crabs, and keep them in a tin basin?"

Lolly left me at once to tell everybody that we were going to catch crabs in Massachusetts, and that it was his opinion that his Papa Dinks was a cruel man to turn them out of their houses.

The next day we left our hot house in the city, and crossed the sound in a Fisk boat. Lolly bumped himself black and blue against the berth. He was stifled for the want of air, got cinders in his eyes, and had his feet stepped on, and his hat knocked over his eyes; but how joyful he was when he reached his grandpapa's house, with crooked stairs, and so many windows with panes no bigger than a sheet of note-paper. A tall clock, black and old, tables and sofas with lions' paws and claws for feet, a heap of pies in the buttery on the shelf, and the jug of molasses. The front door opened on the sea — that is, it did after you crossed the street, and a strip of green where grew the burdock — then came the calm summer sea.

"No, mother," interrupted Lolly, to whom I read this paper, "it was the spring sea. It was not summer when we went."

"I use a poetic license."

"Is that all? Go on."

"The restless swallows were twittering and skimming over the water, or darting to their nests in the wide chimneys and the high eaves of the barn, and brown birds without any names were dancing on the elms, and hopping in the grass; good old mother cows were walking along, chewing the cud, and switching their tails; beautiful smells rose from the grass and flowers, and mixed with a flavor of seaweed and bilge-water. All this ex-hil-a-ra-ted the small soul of Dinks. He was happy. I was not. I felt a derangement in my stomach."

"Derangement!" cries Lolly. "Were you crazy in your stomach, mother?"

"People say so when they are absurd enough to eat too much."

"Go on. Was I happy?"

"Yes. How can you be happy over nothing?" I asked. "He sang, he danced, acting like a humming-bird, whirring and whizzing over every thing and everybody. At night, how tired and limp; but in the morning, again how eager for the coming day! Putting on his stockings wrong side out; making me wild with buttons and strings, when I was so sleepy; peeping through the blinds, to see if it rained, if any flowers were blooming several miles off, if an elephant was going by, or if there were any whales on the wharf.

"Lolly," I asked that night, "was I ever a child?"

"You might have been once. Was grandpa young when you were? Wake up, Papa Dinks! Was mother ever young?"

"Not to my knowledge," replied the elder Dinks. "Dress that boy, and let us have no more of his chatter."

With a twisted mouth Lolly whispers, "Do you like *him*? I don't. Have the hens laid eggs this morning, think? I'll bring you one for breakfast, dear, delicious mother. What makes your cheek so soft? Is it decaying before you die?"

He goes on this way, day after day, happy, busy, restless, and seeking for that which he is sure he has not yet had, but which he is as sure of finding somewhere. A hundred ideas and images swarm like honey-bees in his mind. One night, it must have been toward morning, I feel his hand on my face. He is standing by my bed, begging for five minutes.

And thus I am in durance sweet, in love's prison. His head, hard as adamant, lies on my breast, and I get waifs of hay-colored hair in my eyes and mouth. He is very contented, more than I am. But the five minutes soon pass. I mention the fact.

"I haven't told my dream yet, my Dinks."

"Tell it quick, then."

"I had a dream of negroes; that they lived in the chimney, and ate the chimney-swallows for their roast turkeys. Wasn't that queer, Mrs. Mother? Now tell me a story."

"This is no time for stories: I want to sleep."

"Tell me one a minute long: I'll never ask for any more. Tell me a new story; not an old one, you know."

"Once there was a bear" —

Lolly instantly shed tears, which affect me so that I rouse myself to relate the following tale:

"A violet grew by a mossy stone, a roundish stone; and the moss on it, though soft and silky, stood upon it like a fir forest, a quarter of an inch high. Ferns grew in the moss, fine as a butterfly's wing, and a red toadstool big

as a pearl shirt-button. There was a family of weeds that grew in the neighborhood of the violet, but she never noticed them: that made them mad. They called her Viley.

“At night, when the weeds were tired, they stopped calling her names; but in the morning, when they looked respectable with a drop of clear dew on the end of their green noses, they were pert; and as she trembled with silent delight in the rays of the rising sun, they cried out, ‘Viley! Viley!’ The red toadstool begged her over and over again not to mind the upstarts; but she did, and longed to move on the other side of the mossy stone. It appeared to her as big as a mountain appears to us. How could she travel with one leg, and one light-blue summer suit?”

“Pooh!” interrupted Lolly: “flowers are not alive.”

“Young Major Mole, passing through the

lane one moonlight night, heard Violet crying. The weeds had gone to bed rather wilted, and the toadstool was quite unwell,—some insect had eaten into his velvet ruffles. The ferns were curled in slumber, and the moss was silent. Violet had a good chance for the indulgence of grief.

“‘No father and no mother,’ she whimpered, ‘no brother nor sister, nothing to live for, nobody to please; surrounded by a lot of weeds, heartless ferns, for companions, and one cold toadstool!’ She looked at the latter, so upright in the moonlight, and an idea struck her: she would have a breakfast party of one in the morning; and the weeds should watch her while eating, and *perhaps* she might throw them a crumb.

“‘Where can I get a meal?’ she said, shaking away her tears. ‘There’s not a mouthful in the house. The good-man’s wagon did not

come up the lane to-day. I might have got a chicken.'"

"What can she have?" queries Lolly. "Do think for her, mother."

"Moss-gruel, fern-soup, grass-steaks, water-pudding," I suggest; and Lolly claps his hands with "Goody! good!"

"But Violet did not think of one of these dishes. Major Mole crept under her round leaves, close to the ground, and said, in a smooth, furry voice, —

"Let me help you. Excuse me for listening; but your voice is so sweet, and your tears smell so deliciously!"

"Mercy!" Violet screamed. "You scare me. Where did you come from, strange creature?"

"From my little gallery close by. I am Major Mole, at your service; subterranean engineer."

“‘O Major! I have heard my mamma speak of you. She lived with old Mrs. Weasel, as housekeeper, one spring.’

“She spoke so loud that the sleeping weeds had a dream right off, —

‘Young Major Mole,
Black as a coal,
Will dig a hole,
For Viley to roll
Into to to.’

This was the dream. It made them snore so that Major Mole remarked,

“‘How the wind blows!’

“All the time he was throwing up the earth round Violet’s root: he meant to eat it. He was a bad young Mole. His admiration for her made him want to eat her up!

“‘I was thinking,’ said Violet, ‘about taking breakfast on the toadstool, to tease my neigh-

bors, who don't like me because I dress in colors.'

" 'I know them,' answered the major, more softly nibbling at her stalk. 'I have seen their relations in the poor-house and in the State prison.'

" 'What would you have if you were me?' Violet asked, shivering a little, and thinking the wind blew against her.

" 'Dew-pie is good, though rather flat. Did you ever try ant-stew? That's peppery. Worm-turnovers are not bad, if you like rich food. Choose which you like, and I'll run down the field for them.'

" 'Dear me!' said Violet: 'I do wish the washerwoman would bring home my dishes. She took them all home to wash. I had no soap.'

" 'Huckleberry-blössoms hold considerable. Wish I could find some grasshoppers' legs, for

forks ; but this year's hoppers have not arrived from Africa. I can get a red tulip from Mrs. Brown's garden. You can cool the wine in that.'

" 'I don't feel very well,' said poor Violet.

" 'I am afraid the ground is damp. It has given you cold. You are shaking. Of course you want a bunch of flowers ?'

" 'I hate flowers. What good do they do ? I had rather have a pretty beet.'

" By this time the major was ready to bite through Violet's stem with his sharp teeth.

" 'Vegetables you like, do you ? I like pretty flowers, like yourself.' And then he bit her so that she fell against the mossy stone, insensible and dying.

" 'Violet salad is good. I'll take this home to my wife.' And the major trotted off without a look at the pale little being he had destroyed.

“The sun rose ; and there was poor Violet lying in the moss, as if a little cloud had fallen. The weeds woke up bright and fresh with dew, all ready to call out ‘Viley ! Viley !’ but when they saw the mound Major Mole had made, and the remnant life of Violet, they nudged each other, and repeated their dream. They watched the fading blue petals with curiosity, wondering if anybody would give her a funeral. They nodded and rustled, and said, ‘Guess not, indeed !’ By and by a robin flew down to the mossy stone, and pecked at Violet, thinking her something to eat. That was the last of it.”

“Now I’ll go to my own bed,” said Lolly Dinks. “Are the weeds there still ? I think Violet was foolish.”

After a while I got up and crept into Lolly’s bedroom, which opened into mine, as was my habit every night ; and there he was, lovely and

sweet as any flower that ever grew. Instead of his counterpane, he was covered with my best black and white talma, which he greatly fancied. A white daffodil was on his mouth and against his nose: he had put it there that he might smell it without the trouble of holding it. He was a picture. His hands, more like a lily than any thing else, were folded on his breast, and his white toes poked out from the talma. He was rosy and odorous with balmy sleep, at peace with himself and all the world. I kissed him so hard that he sighed, winked, and opened his eyes.

“Don’t touch me,” he murmured. “I am so comfortable. Don’t move the flower! I like the talma.” And back he dropped into the child-world of sleep and dreams.





CHAPTER IV.

AND so, being in the country, Lolly Dinks and Mrs. Mother went after mushrooms. Who besides can so well sing the pleasure of gathering, in nice baskets, the little button mushroom, which in the last dewy night poked his round white-head above the short grass in the old pasture, and the large, velvet-lined umbrella grandpa mushroom?

Papa Dinks himself one day went with us, without a basket, and was so pleased with the pursuit, that he filled his hat-crown with mushrooms of all ages and sizes; and then he filled his pocket handkerchief too, and it came home all pink-stained. Ever after, he, Papa Dinks, had a *mania*,—a mushroom one. The people

in the village, whose vegetable Litany regarding it was toadstools, thought that the respectable Dinks was crazed. "Why," they asked, "does he go up and down the borders of the road, and over the old fields with bowed head, and now and then stoop to pick something, where there is nothing." But never mind: did we not have silvery stews? And thus Lolly and I found our real, true, impossible fairy life.

One day we were in an old field, and came to a lovely mossy mound: the swamp-pink grew in it, green and brown moss, and nice plants. On one side was a wee thicket, the dog-rose bush, and a small shapely alder; in a shady spot was a bright red fungus, or toadstool. I poked at it with my parasol, and I instantly felt a puff of air, and heard a squeal. I looked down, and saw a tiny, fantastic creature, very much tumbled-head-over-heels, in fact. I saw in her boot-heels a mite of shiny black;

and then I saw on the leaf of a rose a crown, which trembled and glistened like dew. The creature met my eye. "You have made my crown fall off," she said. "But you great insensible beings are always in mischief when you are in the country. I suppose, now, those seeds will be lost."

"What seeds?" I asked.

"Those in my boot-heels. Don't you suppose we can plant flowers, and grow trees, as well as the clumsy bumble-bee? I wish you would stay at home in your brick cages, that stand on stone."

"Oh I am so sorry, madam!" I answered. "Please forgive me. From my cage I can only see other cages before and behind me. Above I see but a strip of sky, below me only a stone pavement, over which goes an endless procession of men, women, and children on errands I never guess at."

"I am queen still," she said. "I may please you, and maybe this lily-like child."

"No," interrupted Mr. Dinks. "My name is Lolly. Can I touch you, speaking flower?"

"My name is Queen Imagin," she replied with dignity.

The queen tapped her head with a white stick like a peeled twig, and made such a noise that I examined it, and saw an ivory knob, which reminded me of the budding horns of a young deer. As if in answer to my thought, she said,

"It drops off every year. In the fairy-nature all elements are united. We partake of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and add our own: this makes us what we are. We do not suffer; but we experience without suffering, of course. Our long lives glide along like dreams. As you are in sleep, so are we awake. If you love the country, which contains our

kingdom, as the filbert-shell contains the kernel, I will endow you with power. I will give you something to take back with you."

What do you think she gave me? A little closet with shelves: on each shelf were laid away all my remembrances of the summer, for me to unfold at leisure. When she gave me the key, which looked exactly like a steel pen, she said, "When you turn the key you will understand my power. All things will be alive, will know as much, and talk as fast, as you do. The closet, in short, is but a wee corner of my kingdom, where to-day and to-morrow are the same, past and present one. A maid-of-honor wishes to go to town. I'll send her in the closet. My slave, the geometrical spider, must spin her a warm cobweb, and, when you open the closet, be sure and not disturb my little Fancie."

Some way Queen Imagin disappeared then.

To any person less knowing than myself, it would have seemed as if a dandelion ball were floating in the air: but I knew better; and I watched her sailing, sailing away till lost behind the trees. The crown was gone too: I discovered nothing in the neighborhood of the red toadstool except a tiny yellow blossom already wilted by the heat of the sun.

Lolly Dinks and I returned to the cage, and autumn has come. No more story but the *closet* for Lolly. I'll unlock that. The key is at hand, in my writing-desk.

Open, Sesame! On the top shelf sits little Fancie, her eyes shining like diamonds in her soft, dusky cobweb. She nods, so do I; and we are in the country again on a summer evening. How the crickets sing! and the tree-toads harp in the trees, as if they were a picket guard entirely surrounding us. Hueston's big dog barks in the lane at just the right distance.

What security I used to feel when I was a little child, tucked away in my bed, and heard a dog bark a mile away, — too far off ever to come up and bite, and yet near enough to frighten prowling robbers !

“When in the breeze the distant watch-dog bayed,” I was about to say ; but Polly, who is with me, calls, “Just hear the mosquitoes.”

The blinds must be closed. What a delicious smell comes in ! The dew, wetting all the shrubs and flowers, distils sweet odors. What a family of moths have rushed in ! This big, brown one, with white and red markings, is very enterprising. He has voyaged twice down the lamp-chimney, as if it were the funnel of a steamship.

“Get out, moth.”

“Sho,” she answers in a husky voice, as if very dry. “It is my nature to : that’s all you know, turning us to moral purposes, and mak-

ing us a tiresome metaphor. We are much like you human creatures, only we don't compare ourselves continually with others. We just scorch ourselves as we please. My cousin, Noctilia Glow-worm, who is out late o' nights on the grass-bank in poor company; the Katy-dids, who board for the season with the Widow Poplar, — a two-sided, deceitful woman, — she does not care where I go, and never shrieks out, 'A burnt moth dreads the lamp-chimney.' If she sees me wingless, she coughs, and throws out a green light, but says nothing. Don't mind me: there's more coming."

It can't be moths making such a noise on the second shelf. It is Tom, who calls out to us, from his room, to come, and help him catch a bat.

"Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wings."

"Always mouthing something," somebody

mutters. But we rush into Tom's room, and behold him in the middle of the floor, flopping north and south, east and west, with a towel. No bat is to be seen. I hear a pretty singing, however, and declare it to be from a young swallow fallen down the chimney ; but as there is no fireplace in the room, my opinion goes for nothing. Tom maintains that it is a bat ; that it flew in by the window ; and that it is behind the bureau. He is right ; for the bat whirrs up to the ceiling and from that height accosts us in a squeaking voice,

“I am weak-eyed, am I ? and my wings are leathery ? Catch me, and you will find my wings are like down, my eyes as bright as diamonds. How much you know, writing yourselves down in books as naturalists ! My name is *Vespertila* : my family are from *Servia*, at your service. Could you offer me a fly or a beetle ? I was chasing Judge Blue Bottle, or

I should not have been trapped. Go to sleep, dears, and leave me to fan you. When you are asleep, I'll bite a hole in your ear, and sup bountifully on your red blood."

Flop went our towels, and down went Miss Vespertila behind the bed, crying. Polly crept up to her, and caught her in a towel. What black beads of eyes had Miss Vespertila from Servia, where her grandfather, Gen. Vampire, still commands a brigade of rascals! Her teeth were sharp, and white as pearls. Polly held her up, as she cunningly combed her furry wings with her hind feet, and said,

"Polly, dear, I itch dreadfully. Do you mind plain speaking? I am full of bat-lice. Ariel caught them, and the folks say that Queen Mab often buys fine-combs" —

"Slanderer!" cried Polly, "fly to your witch-home!"

She shook the towel out of the window, and the bat soared away.

"What's coming next?" we all asked. "There are the rabbits to hear from, the pigeons, the sparrows, the mole, and the striped snake who lives by the garden-gate?"

Slap-Bang! Fancie has pulled the door to. The cunning Queen Imagin placed her in the closet, perhaps, for this purpose. But I have the key. I shall unlock it to-morrow; for I must have the picnic over again, under the beech-tree, where the brown thrush built her nest, and reared her young ones, who ate our crumbs, and chirped merrily when we laughed.





CHAPTER V.

SHE — that is, Queen Imagin — would not do another bit of country for us. I suppose she could not. You know, summer is summer, and autumn is autumn. Every thing and everybody have laws. Nothing and nobody, named number one, have distinctive power. And all these big words Lolly understands when he asks me how many cents nine and fifteen make.

Nobody was in my house, awake. I had a good time for thinking, and shut my eyes to prepare ideas for Lolly Dinks, now slumbering in his bed with a porcelain dog, two milk-biscuit, and Hans Christian Andersen's stories surrounding him. Lovely red, green, and violet patches, spread over the darkness under

my eyelids, like a Persian carpet, which my thoughts could not pass. I opened them again. Somebody *was* in my house, — in my room! A brown mouse! She was hurrying into new lodgings, because some wicked creature had brought a large, dangerous wire-machine up to her door. Her mother had disappeared, a short time ago, in such a machine. To be sure, her mother was carried away by her curiosity, and anxiety to feed her family. A handsome yellow cheese swung from a hook; and she thought that the one-eared old Dutch rat had set up a grocery by her corner.

“I’ll call again, after I am settled. I wish I had my rind with me, but I can tell my name as well: it is Mrs. Musculus.”

She meant her card when she said rind, and it made me laugh. So she grew bold, thinking she had pleased me, and ran a little nearer.

“Have you a thimble to lend me? Rodent,

the cartman, promised to move my things; but he sent me word that the wheel had come off his walnut shell, and he couldn't. I have had to leave my cradle behind; and, if I could get your thimble to rock my twins in to-night, I'll bring it back. I want to come, I am so fond of music."

"Music, Mrs. Musculus? I hear none."

"Why, it is close by you. I have listened all the while I have talked to you. It was so sharp, at first, I feared it might be our mighty enemy, Puss. Hark, please, marm."

I did hear a faint noise now, like a wind blowing through a key-hole; and it came from my writing-desk. Oh, how stupid I was! There was the Queen's Closet I told you of; and Fancie was piping as loud as her weak voice would let her. But I would not open the door while Mrs. Musculus was there. She might be hungry for a small, fat fairy.

"Oh, it is nothing!" I said; "some mosquito singing, or a fly shut up. You can have my thimble one night only. Leave it, in the morning, on the carpet by my work-table."

It was curious to see her roll the thimble away with her tiny paws. It went under the bookcase, where, I am persuaded, her new lodging is, though she pretended to me that it had slipped away from her. She whisked her tail at me with a very pretty flourish, and went under the bookcase too. I opened the closet now, and called to Fancie, who pouted at me for a moment, because I had forgotten her, and must need shut up my eyes, and fuss about red and green and violet-colored pictures.

"I have a mind to come out," she said. "I have staid in the niche so long that I feel fluffy, as if threads were all over me. What kind of weather is it now?"

I put my finger out for her to perch on. She

hopped up, shook out her silver tissue skirts, and actually scraped the soles of her slippers across the place in my finger where my needle had pricked it! Then she looked at the soles, made of bat's wing. How she screamed when I carried her to the window! "What is that coming down so—dreams? That is the way my dreams come."

"Fancie, you goose, that is snow you see."

"Catch some little wings for me, do, mistress, and I will tell you what happens here in the night, when you are in bed, and the room is red and warm with the coal fire. It is a very old place, this."

"Old, Fancie? No, indeed!"

"The Flea said so. He said that he had bitten two summers in this place; and all the Bug family have been here longer, and have been famous for their travels behind the paper and round the cornice." As Fancie chattered

to me like a young magpie, and danced on my hand, I slyly dropped two or three snow-flakes on her shoulders. They covered her like a drift: she floundered and cried, and I tried to blow it away; but her dress was wet through, and she shivered with cold.

"If you were not here, mistress," she said angrily, "Gossa Spider would come immediately from behind the Bay of Naples, and weave me a splendid gray silk robe."

"The Bay of Naples, my dear Fancie, what do you mean?"

"On the wall, mistress: see the waves move inside the golden border."

"Oh, yes, my picture! But come, Fancie, you must tell your dreams now."

"I was only playing. I haven't had any dreams. What did the old fairy-queen say? Dreams to you are the real things to us elves; and all little creatures whose voices you can

never hear, whose actions you can never know, except from us ; and I am not going to tell you one single-thing."

I coaxed the wee being, took her wet dress off with the point of a needle, and put her in my scarlet feather fan, tucked the down round her, and hung it on a nail. It was a very beautiful fan, and she was pleased. Then I got a tiny mother-of-pearl shell, and sprinkled some sugar in it with a drop of orange juice, and asked her to take a glass of orange champagne, using a blue glass bead which belonged to Lolly Dinks for the glass, after stopping one end of it.

"Jolly! jolly!" she exclaimed, and began to tell me about the inhabitants of my room, as fast as her tongue could run.

"Our school was out yesterday. I say *our*, because from the first day you came home with the Queen's Closet, all the creature-people

have been very kind to me ; and I have just been on a round of visits, calls, weddings, funerals, balls, tea-parties, — in short, I know all this metropolitan Insectville. Our school was very nice, — a boarding-school: fifty Red Ants were in the primary department, and they all came from a distance. Have you missed the Red Ants, mistress ? ”

“ Indeed I have, from the sugar-bowl and the cake-basket, and wondered greatly. Have they gone home ? ”

“ Only for a vacation. The academy was the buffet. Miss Cockroach was the principal, very disagreeable, always with the same brown bombazine dress on ; not a bit of trimming. I am sure she chews tobacco, and is so sly and still, coming upon the scholars when they thought she was rummaging in her own room, where she keeps a rag-bag. Chirper Cricket was the music-teacher ; and an old maid,

Geometrical Spider, taught embroidery and knitting. Besides the Red Ants, there was an older class, the children of our best families, long resident, of a dozen Fleas, and as many Bugs, plain but intelligent young persons, very lively and funny; good scholars, but rather selfish and malicious. Poor Red Ants! They said they were glad to get away from the Fleas and Bugs. All their plays were interfered with. When they played 'hide and seek' among the cups and saucers, some Miss or Master Flea came along, and said, 'You can't jump like me,' or 'You are mighty proud because you can carry off cracker-crumbs. See me drag this grain of sugar.' Or a boy Bug plagued them when they marched in company to Chirper Cricket's music, by creeping over them, and pushing them out of rank. But the girl Bugs were the worst. They hid in the bottom of wine-glasses, and made themselves

look like specks ; and when the Red Ants went down there to play, the girl Bugs jumped upon them, and bit and kicked them till they were black and blue. Miss Cockroach hopes the academy will not be so clean when school opens again. She would like a little more smell. Ain't she unfit for her place? She was voted in it, whatever that may be, by politicians, whoever they may be. I heard it from Gen. Earwig. Oh, you should see him, taking a walk in the evening! Such a frowzy old wig as he wears, and a gray uniform, which hangs on him like rags. He goes by the Widow Tessalatum's premises always. She is a beetle, who clacks behind the paper and in the wood-work incessantly. You call her the Death-watch. Nobody ever sees her scarcely ; but she has property, and the general is awful poor. He is not on half-pay even, but retired as you call it ; and he wants to marry this widow.

What do you think, mistress: will she have him?"

"Fancie, how you run on! You don't tell me about any nice, good, sweet-creature people."

"I am coming to them. But you know schools are not nice at all, and old families are not what they used to be. Besides, did you expect to hear of anybody so pretty, so cunning, as your own Fancie?"

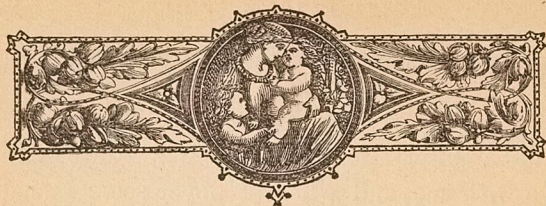
And the tiny tot preened herself among the feathers, and hummed like any bird. Her hair was like a dot of gold, and her eyes were blue as the forget-me-not. She was bewitching.

"I am going to catch you, Fancie. You need not tell any thing more."

She sprang from the fan, and *click* went the closet-door. She was out of sight. On my finger was left a silvery film, which I picked off, and laid upon a paper. It was her dress

of silver tissue, with seed buttons and moss fringe. But she will come back to me. I begin to understand the mysterious beings who live with me, and whom I never see. I shall beg her to introduce the nice creature-folks to me, to tell me the story of their lives for Lolly Dinks.





CHAPTER VI.

TEARS dropping from my eyes did not account for the noise which disturbed me ; but such a trickling went on somewhere ! I was crying, but no matter about telling why. Perhaps Lolly Dinks had hurt my feelings ; for in the morning he called me a mean mother, because I would not give him two eggs.

Drip, drippy, drip, every minute. Fancie, the little witch, must be at the bottom of it. I tapped at the door of the Queen's Closet smartly with my pen : the door flew open, as it was obliged to do when I wished ; but Fancie, looking like thistle-down, refused to stir. She

heard no noise but the singing in her ears, from the influenza, which the snowflake bath gave her. I coaxed her, and told her what beautiful flowers had just come, — pink rosebuds, white carnations, cape jasmine, and lilies-of-the-valley; but she shook her head. However, when I told her that Lolly Dinks's grandpa, old Sir Dinks, had sent him some pure honeycomb, and that she should have a whole cell of it, with a straw to suck out the honey, she said she would come, just to oblige me.

“You need not call me perverse,” she said. “I am no worse than the Dinks tribe of children: neither have souls. I'll be good now. The noise comes from the flower-vase. A cataract fell on the floor, because you put too much water in. Get the honey.”

I put her in a lily-of-the-valley bell, — it was a tight squeeze to tuck her in, — and made a paper tent over her, so that no wandering, ugly

mote should come along, and knock her down with its woolly arms, and then gave her the honey. She laughed so that all the lily-bells tinkled, and nodded, and called out, —

“We are in for it too. See the silver-white globe of Fairyland swinging in the air, coming down, round and round, for us all.”

I waited. By the twitching in my pen, I knew something charming would this way come.

What a sweet room I was alone in! so still, and full of beautiful color: the air was scented with my flowers. It was warm, with a bright big fire. Pictures in gold frames hung round the lavender-colored walls; red sofas and chairs stuffed thick, and crinkled all over with tufts and folds: and painted vases, cups, and boxes, and hundreds of books, with purple and brown, green, black, and gold covers, standing straight as soldiers behind glass doors, and gay curtains,

flowered all over. Oh, I felt it lovely! I walked round, and touched every thing, and came along by the puddle.

There stood poor Gen. Earwig, shabbier than ever. He had a cane in his hand, and was pointing across the water with it.

"The wind is fair, marm," he said, "and the sea smooth. The party will enjoy a sail. They would like to picnic on Dictionary Island. But where are the preparations, the preparations?"

Before I could answer, Mrs. Musculus bustled in from Worktable Street. Her tail beat the carpet, and she flapped her ears.

"What upon mousehole," she squeaked, "does it mean? I smell musk: it must be that Don Beetle is close by."

"Ahem, Mrs. Musculus," answered Gen. Earwig, "he is here, with his aunt, the Widow Tessalatum."

"From Greenside," cried Fancie, with her

mouth full of honey. "More strangers are coming."

Mrs. Musculus, full of curiosity, ran to my desk, and peeped up under the paper tent.

"Go away, you foolish gray chatterbox," ordered Fancie. "You take up too much room. Still, if you are wanted to clean the fish, you can be at hand."

"I am ready to be useful," answered Mrs. Musculus. "I am glad I left the twins at home."

Such a crowd gathered on the shore of the lake! Two Blue-flies came down from somewhere, bringing grains of brown-sugar for their share of the sailing-party treat. Major Formica, his wife, and two red-haired, tight-laced daughters, came with a lot of provisions in spider's-egg bags, and sat upon them. A proud Lady-bird, who threatened to "fly away home" whenever anybody ventured near her, walked

up and down, showing her red dress to the Blue-fly gentlemen, who crossed their legs superciliously, and winked with their round eyes. Some lively Cockroaches, just over with the measels, marched in a band, and sung, —

“The sea, the sea, the open sea.”

All were waiting for the boat; and presently the funniest, leanest, old gray Mouse came out of Rug Park with the boat on his back. Mrs. Musculus turned pale, and muttered, —

“The old creature has been to my hole-house.” And so he had, and had brought a big egg-shell with the top gnawed off, and beautifully painted with the yellow yolk. This old-tar-mouse had been to sea all his life, and knew the taste of grog; but he was now old and forgetful.

“Where are the oars?” somebody asked.

“And the sail?” another.

"We'll make out," replied the tar-mouse.

"Yes, of course you will, you old rat," muttered Mrs. Musculus; "been and hauled our barn out of the yard."

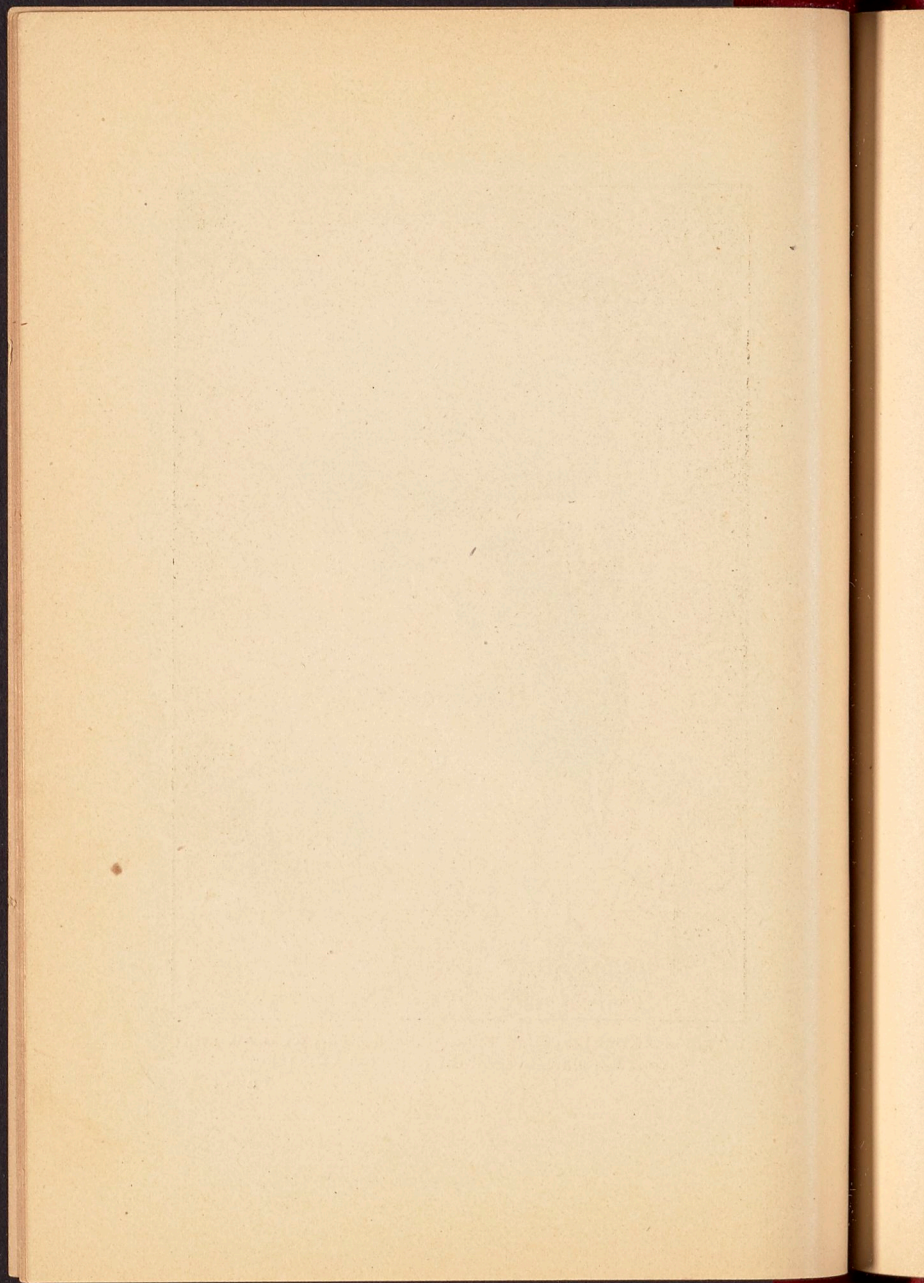
The lively cockroaches picked up a match, and dragged it to the shore. The boat was launched, the match shipped, and tar-mouse took his place to scull the party over the lake. Straws were put across the boat for seats, and a bit of egg-skin was hoisted for a banner. There was no room for Mrs. Musculus, and she pretended she had no thought of going: she just wanted to see them off. She was allowed to hold the thread, and cast it off. Don Beetle and his aunt came running down at the last moment, and jumped so violently aboard that everybody screamed.

"Now, then, avast and be taffrailed!" bellowed the tar-mouse, and the boat slowly swung round beautifully; but the water was so shoal



"The boat was launched, the match shipped, and tar-mouse
took his place to scull the party over the lake."

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that presently she ran aground, and poor tar-mouse had to get overboard, and tail and paw her over. It was a gay party, though. The Fleas played a tune with their nippers, the Blue-flies buzzed exquisitely, but poor Gen. Earwig was seasick. He turned a dreadful color; and he swore, and stamped every one of his legs.

"Aunt," whispered Don Beetle, "you will never think of giving your hand to that man?"

"I ticked that I should at one time, but I have changed my mind. His stomach is greatly disordered," she replied.

Don Beetle was happy: he wanted his aunt's property behind the wall. He danced on deck, stuck out his dandy antennæ, and made himself acceptable to the Miss Formicas. I saw them land at Dictionary Island, and the party climb up the leather bank. It was a bare and bleak

place, but it seemed to have a spell for them: they wandered over the island, feeler in feeler, exchanging nips and rubs. And what do you think they cooked? A whole heap of the little slicks, or silver-fish, which they caught in the back of Dictionary Island, at Glue Ravine! They had dust instead of salt, and were much refreshed. After supper there was a dance, and then a quarrel. Don Beetle and Blue-fly No. 1 got mad, because Miss Formica promised to dance the same dance with both. Don Beetle pulled Blue-fly's leg off at the second joint, and Blue-fly spat in Don Beetle's great bulging mouth. The Widow Tessalatum screamed so that the youths were parted.

Fancie laughed so at them, that I jumped out of my chair, with such a jingle in my ears.

"Missis," she said, "your eyes have been shut ever so long. I am sticky all over. Wash me, and let me go home. I am too tired to

wait for the party to return. You have been sweet, missis, to me. I'll kiss you."

"How shall I wash you?"

"With a moist roseleaf."

So I took a pink roseleaf, and she hopped upon my finger. I rolled her entirely in the leaf, and then shook her out of it into the web in the closet.

"Dear me, *I* have had nothing, and am nobody," sobbed Mrs. Musculus, under a crust of bread.

"And that is just *my* case, Mrs. Musculus: I am nobodier and nothings."





CHAPTER VII.

THE last day of winter came for Lolly Dinks this year; for me too, and for Fancie. Soon the last day in our city-house will come, and we shall all be going up and down the country, as gay and crooked in our paths as the butterfly's flight over the fields and thickets.

Last night the pale, golden-haired poet, Milton, turned his old green arm-chair round, and I heard him say, —

“Fancy then returns into her private cell
When Nature rests.”

He shone like a cloud with a silver lining in his dark dress; the bookcase door clapped to,

and I saw a row of silent books merely. I understood why Fancie wanted to come to town. In the long, stern, cold sleep of Nature, behind the mask of snow and ice, what would have become of her if left out of doors? There is nothing but seed-vessels for her to travel over the country in. The leaves are dead and brittle, the briers sharp and dry, the berries hard and tasteless; nothing green in the woods but the solitary holly-bush, which the Christ-child keeps alive for Christmas, and the ground-pine, which softly creeps below the leaf-mould, twisting its green ropes and its pretty feather-shaped leaves yards and yards, as if it were a telegraph-wire for the moles and other creatures who wish to hear from each other promptly. Fancie's grandmother lives at the root of an oak; and on sunny days she comes out, and sits on the green rope, and holds a leaf over her head for a parasol and to

keep off the wind. The singing-birds have flown for the most part over the sea : a few are hid in swamps and tree-trunks. Every flower-root is in a fit of somnambulism. The queen could not provide Fancie with a private cell : she did not wish to put her out to board in the hut of the field-mouse, or in the mole's gallery. They said if she came she must go down to the brook to bathe : they could not bear water or air. Therefore, under the pretext of amusing me, the queen had sent Fancie in the Closet.

“Ah, Missis!” cried Fancie, while I was writing this on paper, “you have treated me well ; and you shall see the buds and bells of May, the speckled eggs in the mossy nests, and you shall see me swing on the yellow daffodil, and take a nap inside the lady-slipper. Mercy, Missis ! what has come ?”

She hops up my pen-handle, and stretches out her neck.

"Is that the garden of Eden, Missis? and shall we see grandpa Adam again? You know, when he dropped his first tear in the garden, a fairy ring appeared in the green sward, and presently the first fairy rose up. I am not sure he noticed it, for his eyes were set upon the arbor where Grandma Eve was."

I was not surprised at Fancie's amazement; for she saw my flower-ship, which Lord Sutt, a printer, sent me in the middle of a moonlight night. A white-and-gold flower-ship, whose hull was filled with the reddest and whitest of flowers. The ship rested upon a basin of flowers also, as if she were floating over a flowery sea; all round the sea-marge were Egyptian calla lilies, that lolled out their long yellow tongues, as if they were longing for the Nile-bees to come and flour themselves in the thick pollen. There were roses, carnations, camellias, lilies-of-the-valley, hyacinths;

and the masts and ropes of the ship were twined with green smilax. Four little life-boats hung from the side of the ship, packed full of violets.

“Was Lord Sutt born in a chimney?”

“He was born where Lolly Dinks was born.”

She turned up her nose at the mention of a mere little boy; and swaying her arms up and down, pirouetting first on one foot and then on the other, she fluttered from the pen towards the flower-ship, and lighted upon the gilded ropes of the mainmast. To my surprise, she ordered me to open the door of my goldfinch's cage. I may not have mentioned my goldfinch, named Bright Eye by Lolly Dinks. He is a scoundrel; and, if there was a State's prison for birds of his feather, he would be there this moment, making shoes for his fellow-criminals' claws. Last Christmas Day he arrived here in a red-and-green cottage, which was hung in the

window. He appeared like a respectable bird, chirped and hopped in a lively manner, and interested me so that I decided to buy a Mrs. Goldfinch for him. I bought one, and put her in his cottage. He nipped her, pulled out her feathers, scolded at her, and would not sing a note. One day all her feathers stood up, and I knew she was heart-broken; so I took her out of his cottage, and she died in a short time. As Fancie ordered me, I opened the door, and he flew out to the flower-ship, close to her, and began to gnaw the gilded ropes. He looked very vain, and declared that they were pure gold, much better than the flowers, and he could scratch off a dollar's worth.

"Poor, deceived Dr. Watts," said Fancie sadly. "Birds have failed me: I thought they were all live flowers, — sweet, pure, and innocent; and this little wretch talks of dollars. Missis, our queen wants me. May I go home

in the life-boat here, which is full of violets?"

"First, my little Fancie, we must bid farewell to our friends; and I am afraid to let you go till the anemone blooms in the bleak woods."

"I heard the sap sing a week ago. I suppose I shall miss the cheese. You can give good-by for me to the friends."

"Cheese, Fancie! what do you mean?"

"And dust, cinders; above all, the human-crowd smell. I am not quite sure how I can get out of the tangle in your air of human speech. Missis, I see a thousand curves and threads crossing each other, making a great web, that rises and rises like a balloon in the sky. It is all words; and where is it trying to get to?"

"Heaven, Fancie."

She looked dull and dumb; and then I recol-

lected that fairies have no spirits, and so cannot understand what the land of souls means. We say, too, that animals have no souls, and trees and flowers.

Why did not Bright Eye sing while I kept his new mate in his cage? Why do trees wave so mysteriously in the wind? I think they are begging to be taken from the ground, that they may have the chance of making stump-speeches in other parts of the world. And why do flowers send out odors when night comes, even those cut from their stalks and put in vases? The feeblest fading rose will send a tide of perfume through a room when he cannot stir an inch. But I must change the subject.

"Fancie, where are you?" She was not on the flower-ship, neither was Bright Eye. She had made a bridle of smilax, put it round his neck, and was riding on his back up and down my new chintz lambrequins.

"Am I up high enough for your heaven, Missis?" she called. "See me ride the jockey hitch. Bright Eye does not gallop at all."

"Let him fly, Fancie, and come down quickly: something may hurt you," I said. Bright Eye declared she squeezed his wings so he could not fly. She boxed his ears, and lost her hold; and he fluttered softly down to my desk, the gold wire sticking to his bill, and Fancie all a-dust with flower-meal.

"I wanted to try the fields of space first," she said. "As I told you, I shall miss every thing,—the Cockroach school, Granny Musculus and her cheese, old Earwig's shabby trousers,—all. They wait for me now."

"Who waits, my little pet?"

She nodded towards the window, and I looked up at the roof opposite: high up in the air, on the coping, stood a row of purple and

white pigeons, their heads on one side, and their eyes fixed on my window.

"The queen's messengers," whispered Fancie seriously. I felt a strange flutter near, and for an instant I could not see. Fancie spoke again, as if she were farther off.

"Your memory of me, by and by, will remind you of those colored flakes and sprays of seaweed one collects, and spreads on paper. I shall be a film in your mind, Missis. Farewell, farewell!"

I opened my eyes. Far down the street, high up in the air, I saw the pigeons flying: my little Fancie was gone.

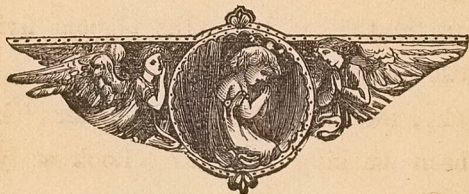
"Why, mother," cried Lolly Dinks, "have you been smoking a cigar? Look at your desk!"

Alas! the closet had gone. A tiny cone of white ashes stood in its place, which Lolly Dinks with vigorous breath blew away.

"Now, perhaps, you will come away," he said. "I am tired of seeing you scratch with your pen."

"What will you do without Fancie, Lolly Dinks?"

"I love giants and apes, and what you did when you were young, best. Tell me, mother, what you did in your early life."





CHAPTER VIII.

I KNOW I am a boy," said Lolly Dinks.
"You have told me so often enough ; but is that any reason why I should not have a pair of satin slippers, with blue rosettes and a gold ornament ? How did you know that I was a boy when I was born ? Ah, ah, Mrs. Mother, you did *not* know ! Now, may I have the slippers to wear to Ally's party ?"

"When is it to be ?" I ask.

"In a little while."

"I should as soon think of dressing up a mouse in satin shoes."

Lolly sits down near me, and presently a large tear of the first water rolls down his cheek. He neither snuffles nor sobs : but he

pokes his forefinger first into one eye, then into the other, whether to increase or stop the flow of the tear-duct, I cannot say; but his hand looks so desperately little, so inadequate to stem a tear-tide even, and his whole self so limp and wo-begone, that my heart melts within me. I long to give him a shoe-shop. He discerns my mood; a cunning look comes into his limpid, beautiful eyes; he cocks his head to one side, and with a saintly smile says plaintively, —

“I wish I had something to do. Can you tell me what you did when you were young? or about that old man, Don Quixote?”

“I have told you every thing over and over again. Go, play.”

“Nothing to play with.”

Lolly has a room in the attic, so full of play-lumber that his theatre has to be kept in the passage outside, and the painter fell over it the other day, and dratted it.

"Get your picture Bible."

"Poo!"

"Lolly!"

"Poo!"

I rise and shake my child, and, feeling the extreme sharpness of his shoulder-blades, am cut to the soul with remorse, as though with a penknife; but I go on with the shake, doing the business thoroughly. I was glad to hear the door-bell ring, and to see little Ally herself, in a fluster of delight, with her shoes in her hand, which she had brought to me to obtain my approbation.

"Oh!" said Lolly, with an indifferent voice, "they will answer for mouse-shoes."

"You said yourself, Lolly Dinks," she replied hotly, "that you were going to beg your mother for a pair exactly like them."

"That was yesterday."

"It won't be to-morrow," she added triumphantly.

“Never mind, -children ; go to the play-room now.”

And off they went. I also went about my work, and left Ally's slippers on the table, and — they disappeared. We hunted the house for them, — I perplexed, Ally tearful, and Lolly mysterious, — so much so that I accused him of hiding the shoes with a malicious intention of teasing Ally, and revenging himself for my denial. But gone they were, at all events ; and I was convinced that Lolly had nothing to do with their vanishing, when he seriously affirmed that a *mouse* had carried them off. This was the fact. An ambitious maternal mouse, over-hearing my talk with Lolly, determined to procure them for her daughter, who was about to make her *début* in the highest mouse circles. As soon as the room was empty, this mouse-mother called her daughter, who was busy behind the piazza, trying to make rats out of

ravellings for a head-dress, and rubbing her little paws with a bit of suet to keep them smooth for the dance she was invited to that evening.

"Come quick, Micena, before the upright creatures return. I heard them talk about party shoes; and why should we not borrow them?"

"Ain't they lovely, ma? I don't believe they are shoes: they look like those boats called yots; I don't want to go sailing, you know."

"Hush, I know best: I have been in the world a great while. Now I have nibbled two holes: put your fore-paws through; there, that brings the rosette across your back *en pannier*. Be-au-ti-ful! Let your tail droop over the heel; the satin sides will hide your gray balmoral skirts."

"O Ma!" said Micena, panting, "how

heavy the thing is, but it is so becoming! I look like a queen in her robes."

Mother and daughter hustled and tugged over the shoe, and finally reached home with it, so exhausted and sweaty that a cat smelled them from the garden-wall, and made such a rush at their door, that they sat trembling and full of chills till she was called away. A neighbor was then engaged to help tote the mate of the shoe, which was stored under a piece of matting. So Ally went home without her slippers, and was very melancholy for almost half an hour; but her party was a success. Four quarts of ice-cream were eaten, and eighty lady-fingers, and all the children played fair; nobody threatened to go home because they were not made enough of: and when Ally said her prayers she added a forgiveness to the mouse-thief; for Lolly Dinks had made her believe that he should buy a trap with the

money he had in the bank, and catch the bad mouse. It was different with the mouse-party. Great pains were taken, but it proved a dull affair. It came off between the cross-beams of our parlor-floor, and the hall was lighted by the gas penetrating the cracks. Micena was so overloaded with Ally's slipper that she found dancing very tiresome. No partner asked her a second time, she was so clumsy; and oh! how her tail ached with hanging over the edge while her friends were so lively keeping time with theirs, whisking them about in every direction. In vain her mother tried to keep her courage up, by telling her she was the belle of the ball, and that her costume was perfectly unique. Micena shed tears, which soaked into the satin.

"I am mad enough," she said, "to gnaw this old blue bunch to bits. I cannot enjoy my supper: the cheese-rinds and the bacon-rinds

came from Delmonico's too, and the tickets cost sixteen dollars each. Ma, I do not believe in stolen finery."

Her mother looked gloomy. Was this the reward she deserved at her daughter's hands? When she had trifled with her honor too; for never before had she stolen any thing but food, and it was lawful to do that, by the old Mousna Charta, made hundreds of years ago, when the first Norse Rat sailed from Norway to England. Dear, dear, how low she felt! Micena's cup ran over, when two beautiful young men mice entered the ball-room, and passed her coldly by, to be introduced to a little gray mouse, with a bit of yellow straw stuck in one ear by way of ornament.

"Your shoe might as well run down at the heel, and turn me out, ma, now," said Micena.

"Hush, they are looking at you now."

One of the young gentlemen brought his tail

round, and kinked it in his eye, like an eyeglass, and muttered, —

“It would be difficult to say where the shoe pinches there; but it does evidently. What a slow party!”

To this complexion had Micena come at last. The cruel little gray mouse giggled, and Micena fainted. Water was thrown over her, and the destruction of Ally's shoe was complete. Some friends helped the wretched couple into the dressing-room, and extricated Micena from the shoe; but her tail was stiff with a hopeless neuralgia. Mrs. Musculus, our old friend, slyly shoved the shoe into a corner. “There's no such institution as mouse-shoes,” she remarked; “but these things may answer for the twins, the same as cradles. Where is the mate, Micena dear?”

“I forbid any person's appropriating other people's property,” said Micena's ma, with the dignity of a Cæsar.

"Ho, ho!" answered Mrs. Musculus, "how we apples swim!"

We found Ally's shoe on the piazza afterwards, without speck or stain upon it, and Lolly Dinks wondered over it greatly: till I imparted these facts to him, I could not touch his moral sense.

"While they were about it, why didn't the mother mouse wear the other shoe to the ball, and so make herself look young, like her daughter? And why didn't they call it a Fancy Ball, and pretend they were in the *Goody Two Shoes* costume? That's the way I'd have gone."





CHAPTER IX.

L OLLY DINKS has made scissors a matter of reflection to me, — an ever-existing excitement between us. *Scissio, scissum, scindere*, — to cut, to divide — let us sing, my Lolly! There is a bird called the Scissor-bill, and my favorite scissors are shaped like a bird, with long legs, and long slender bill; his eyes are the pivot, and he cuts with his sharp bill. Lolly Dinks knows how I treasure this steel bird, whose nest is in my pretty Chinese work-basket. At least twice a day, he either begs it, or asks in an indifferent voice if I know where it is.

“Mother dear,” he asks, standing before me with some crumpled stuff, “can I just have the

bird-scissors for one minute to cut something lovely? I'll bring 'em right back."

I answer with unrelenting severity, "No, certainly not; find your own. You shall not spoil mine."

"Ah, Mrs. Mother, mine are lost: I can't wait; please, please, please! I shall take them: you know I must."

"There, take them; and never let me hear you ask for them again as long as you live. Mind now."

"No, mother dear."

And we both understand that this is an old story.

In fifteen minutes I myself have an excruciating necessity for them, and — they are lost. An unhappy altercation takes place, in which my voice travels several blocks, at least: I feel red in the face, and hot all over. Lolly Dinks, however, is mighty cool, and screws up his face with fine effect as I reproach him.

"You didn't want your scissors then," he says. "Never willing to do any thing for me. I never have any thing I want; and because I ask you for your scissors, to cut one piece of paper, you are the crossdest mother I ever saw in my life. How many are five and seven? John said five and seven were fourteen. O mamma! I am going to have the loveliest scene in my theatre."

Lolly entirely forgets the scissors: how can I bring him to a sense of his utter selfishness? I do not forget. As he returns to his play, like a giant refreshed by our lively combat, a moral dawns upon me, which I must shape, and present to him, as a portion of the education he must undergo.

Why are the laws which regulate us in many trivial things so apparently immutable? Scissor experience is an example. I have lately conferred with an eminent literary lady on this

subject, and she tells me my experience is the universal one.

“We keep our scissors, and children lose them,” she said. Beyond this axiom she could not get. She added, however, that she had a relative, who, after long torment with her children on the scissor question, rushed out one day, and bought for each of them a pair of bluntly-pointed scissors. My friend came away before she could learn the result from her emancipated relation. But, somehow, I do not believe her system worked: I am sure that mother and children returned to first principles, and continued to “cut and come again.” She reminded me of that class of martyrs who smile in the face of their executioners, and extend a forgiveness that is neither wanted nor asked for.

Lolly Dinks, gifted with deft fingers and a constructive mind, early showed an aptitude

for scissors. I only allowed him to use those that for the most part belonged to the castaway tribe of cutlery, — such as have no local habitation in box or basket, but are dropped like rubbish, — dull, gray with age, and whose edges graze and fray the substance they come in contact with, no longer able to shear the expanse of silk and linen, darting through their surface as the long-tailed, steel-blue, slim dragon-fly darts over streams or high into the air, both lively young fellows, gay with hope, confident in power. These implements Lolly, with growing intelligence, shook off, and soon knew what was “Rogers’ Best;” and nobody’s best scissors were safe from his slender white paws.

“Have you seen my scissors?” was everybody’s daily cry wherever he was. Impatient, irritable, imperative searches were made for them, in which he never condescended to take part, though the darling knew that the same

scissors were lying *perdu* among his playthings. How he did slash in those infantile days! Once a carpet woman came to make me a carpet: she brought shears, which appeared too mighty for him, consequently he was fascinated by them. He followed her, watched her journey up and down the carpet-seams, treating her with great politeness. When she snipped a thread he playfully attempted the same, and she was at considerable pains to show him how to open the shears. She changed her opinion of the forward and promising boy, when she discovered that he had cut into her breadths, and etched into her selvage, making a nice mess for her to darn.

"Your child is very mischievous: I never saw his beat," she said, with a spanking look in her eye.

"He is learning to cut his way through life," I replied. Had she been a scholar, which she

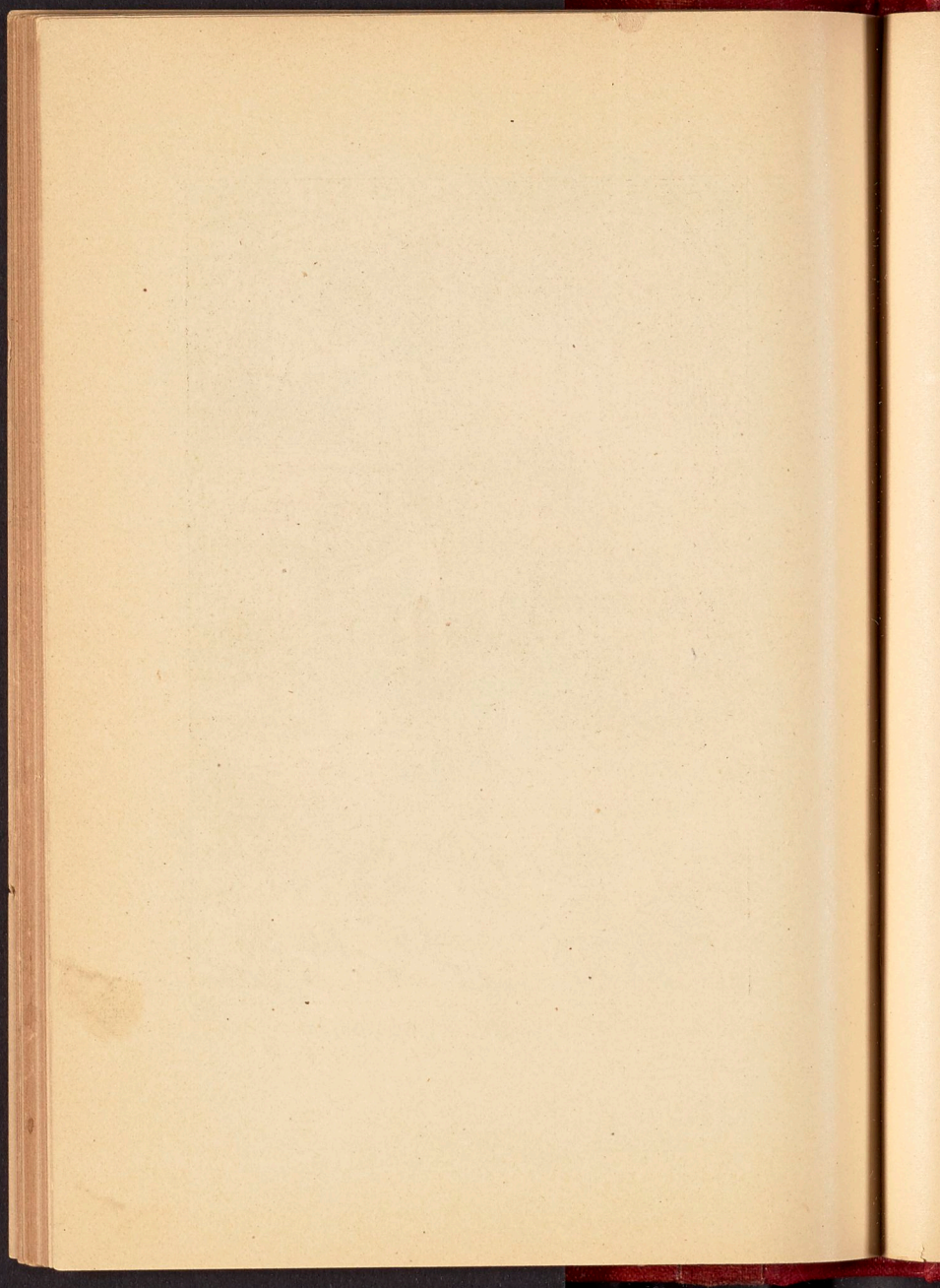
was not, I should have brought in the Gordian knot. His devotion to scissors reminded me of the ailing barber in Dickens, who kept his scissors in his bed, and snipped at every thing which came within his reach. When the lawyer made his will by the bedside, the barber secretly cut the hair all off from the back part of his head. Lolly also gouged out locks of his own hair, and those of his little playmates. While I told him touching stories, he slyly cut bits from my skirts. When not observed, his work was more elaborate in the way of flagreeing my ribbons, shoes, shawls, and my needle-work. The Sisters Three could not be more industrious with their fateful shears than my little Lolly, who, I must own, was very cunning in his mischief. As the scissors blades closed in his fingers, his mouth worked up and down with serious interest, and his hands flew in and out, like tiny white birds.

All this has changed. He is now a skilful manager of scissors, and only applies them to his own properties. In doing this, he does a great deal. He cuts out pictures; draws and paints pictures himself on white paper, and cuts those; tissue paper of all colors, he, with the scissors, manufactures into all sorts of articles; he has even, by adding a little mucilage, made a tissue-paper dress; he converts bristol-board into various useless and pleasing things; paper dolls by the gross are scissored, — dolls' clothes likewise; patterns are got up, bearing no resemblance to any thing on earth — but to which my attention is continually challenged — and figures which could only be devised by the dreamy imagination of a child, grotesque and absurd, he turns out by the peck.

“Mother,” Lolly often interrupts me with, “tell me which is the prettiest, this red ogre, or this blue fairy?”



“ Mother, tell me which is the prettiest, this red ogre or
this blue fairy ? ” Page 102.



"Lolly, I do not know."

"Which do you think?"

And I am compelled to give judgment. My floors are covered with masses of odds and ends of all colors. Daily the maid carries off the scissors *débris*, — the history of Lolly Dinks's performances; and if our ash-man happens to have a philosophical turn of mind, he will feel that he has often the end of a theatrical exhibition, extinguished in ashes; but "even in these ashes," is shown a dramatic individuality. But who knows? An ash-man was always a mystery to me and Lolly Dinks, and we don't like to speak of him.

During this period the scissors that have been in use assume a biographical character in my recollection; and, if they could be laid away upon a shelf where "steel does not rust," I am sure that they would be landmarks in Lolly's memory, or a pair of back stairs for him to

mount, every one of which would give him a vivid picture of his childish acts. There was Old Red Top,—an ancient pair, named from a bit of red ribbon on the bows, whose blades fell apart from sheer weakness, and who, curiously enough, cut better at one time than another. Then there was Stubby,—no one knew the origin of these scissors: Stubby appeared. Without point was Stubby, and obstinate at the pivot, never opening without a squeak, as if it hurt, and when closed upon any soft article clinging to it, and not cutting, but drawing it apart. And Fatbow, the oldest steel inhabitant in the family. Fatbow was first aware of use in an ebony box lined with white velvet, and decorated with pretty sewing-implements, not one of which, nor the box, survives Fatbow. A small creature, but remarkable in execution, delicate in point, short, round, and large in bow, Fatbow never lost

edge, and was always powerful enough to sever matter much greater than itself in size. Fatbow sometimes slipped away, but never went really astray for any time.

“Where is Fatbow?” often cried Lolly. “Of course in the draw with the brushes; and I wish you would not cut my nails; I hate these scissors worst of all I ever saw in my whole life.”

Our favorite, the Bird Scissors, and much cared for, I have mentioned; but the most magnificent of all scissors was Whaler, so named, perhaps, because the blades were large and rounding, and the bows were of ivory. Whaler remained for the most part in a red morocco case, and was individualized by a certain sacredness, which induced Lolly to find and use Whaler, without leave or license from me, and to enjoy the deed with fear and trembling. The cutter of cutters, though, a fact we could not hide

from Lolly, was Silver-edge, the gift of a friend, — a lovely pair of scissors, which were handed in one night, in a fine case of silver cardboard and red ribbon. It was made to hang on the wall, to fly to in emergency ; and it was hung so. Lolly Dinks had his lesson concerning it ; but one day Silver-edge was missing, and something had to be cut. At last Silver-edge was discovered on the floor of Lolly Dinks's theatre, which was made out of a dry-goods box, and curtained with yellow tissue paper, by the service of Silver-edge. Happily this occasion was the means of a reform in regard to that one pair — no other. And Scissors must continue to point the moral, and adorn the tales, of Lolly Dinks's Mother.



CHAPTER X.

“Now,” cried Mr. Dinks, “*that* is utterly mean! Point a moral, and adorn a tale! It is a cheat. You have been talking *good-boy-book* to me, and it is very uncomfortable indeed. And now there is nothing for me to do, nothing to have, nothing to hear. Wish I had something to do.”

After these pleasing remarks, I fell into a coffee-brown study. Perhaps I could *not* point a moral, for these be parlous times for morals: but, at any rate, I might adorn an example; for was not my own small Dinks a great example for little boys? — especially for little boys who should keep fat, eat a great deal, and make no observations upon any thing; who, in fact,

must never annoy their friends by being pitchery, and who must never bother anybody by inquiring into the nature of any object around them. Whether it was diamond cut diamond, that the constant use and destruction of scissors by my offspring Dinks caused his bones to take on an awful edge at his minute elbows, his shoulder-blades to come out of his back so far that I didn't know but that he was growing a new sort of wing without feathers, and his ribs to suggest a wrecked doll-boat, with her planks all gone, — I am not prepared to say. I know, that, about this time, he was no fatter than a lucifer match, with its sputtering brown head, or an infant colt, distracted by its own long legs.

Then that portion of my friends who sustain their spirits on the advice they give to others rose up against me.

No. 1 said, "That child won't live, unless you manage differently."

No. 2, "You should, my dear Mrs. Dinks, adopt my system, which *never* fails." (N. B. — The children of adviser No. 2 were like pale clay bricks, physically and morally.)

No. 3, "It is your duty to compel your child to eat oatmeal porridge and fish. You know there is a great deal of phosphorus in fish, Mrs. Dinks."

And so on with the whole social mining corps.

Finally Papa Dinks himself, a severe man, who always gets his cousins to castigate his enemies, joined the unhappy chorus. At lunch, one day, present the three Dinkses; viands, — warmed-over soup, milk-toast, cookies, Yarmouth bloaters.

"Lolly, my boy," said Papa Dinks, assuming a cheerfulness which he was far from feeling, flourishing his ladle with the air of a benevolent reformer, and in an artificial voice which always provokes the ire of his son, "have some good, nice, warm soup?"

"Soup!" shouts Lolly, "haven't I said a hundred times that I hate soup? it is worse than"—suddenly lifting the cover of the dish of toast—"worse than toast." Down comes the ladle on the table, with such a tap that I know it is dented.

"If that was my child, I would whip him," said Papa Dinks.

"Mr. Dinks, that ladle was one of my wedding presents."

"If," continues Pater Dinks, "*if* I had any thing to do with that boy, I would make him eat what was set before him."

"Why don't you take him in hand, Mr. Dinks? He is yours as much as he is mine. You leave every thing to me," I remarked.

"He is *your* child, and I am not allowed to interfere with him."

"Were you as young as me when you married papa?" interrupts Lolly; "and was his hair white then?"

Hereupon Alice, the waiter, gives a faint moan, to hide a laugh ; because, you know, little children, waiters must never laugh nor cry when they wait upon us. They are not beings, like *us*, you know ; they are made of *Stuff*. And Alice says, —

“Sure, I may poach yez an egg.”

“Ouf, eggs !”

“Lolly, dear, the cookies are ever so nice !”

“I shall never eat a cooky as long as I live,” replies Lolly, with an air of pensive sweetness.

“Have you spring chicken, or sweet-bread ? Well, I am not hungry : never mind.”

“That boy is coming to grief,” remarks Mr. Dinks ; and Lolly goes off, to come back an hour afterwards to beg me for cookies.

I bottle the spirit of all the advice ; and, as the edges of his bones keep sharp still, I pack up a box, and send him to some friends in the country where flows the mother of rivers, who

live on the summit of a hill named Clover Top ; and behold ! a slow miracle took place, which has enabled me to give a mild finish to this important work, equalled only by Lucretia P. Hale, and surpassed by the recovered veteran, whose spirit will never die out of the memory of children, — Hans Christian Andersen. I am a good and true woman, as everybody who does not know me fully understands. Therefore, I am willing to humiliate and pain myself like any thing, for the sake of perplexed mothers and wilful children. When Lolly Dinks had been in Clover Top a week, I received a postal card from him, which ran thus ; —

Dear

mother and fither

I send my love. I want

a dolar or two. I went to

a pic nic, the horse stopped

and Marian cried. She was

mean I got wet. Aunt Sade
mended my stockings. I send
you my love. Send me dol
with light hair. Send dolar.
More decalamonies I want
give fither my love. Come as
soon as you can. Lolly Dinks.
I wore Ant Sade's nite gown
it had a train.

Miracles are very long. They don't seem so
to those who catch them, after they are finished;
but they are, and I have to use many words to
write out the Dinks miracle.

In one week from this a letter came from my
friend who had charge of Lolly, which warmed
the cockles of my heart; though I could not, for
the life of me, explain what those cockles were.

"Dear Mrs. Dinks," said the letter, "your
Lolly is a wonderfully good boy; and he eats.
The potatoes jump out of their skins when

he comes to the table, and don't the bread diminish before the tiny locust? He sleeps like a top, a patent top, I mean, — ring within ring. He is the most obedient child I ever saw, and amuses himself: he is no trouble at all. Comparing him with other children, we all think that you and Mr. Dinks may consider yourselves very fortunate parents."

"Of course," said Papa Dinks, to whom I read the letter. "I always told you he would turn out well: he is an A1 boy."

A miserable rest followed his departure. The old Dinks party were altogether too comfortable. I wept on the north side of the bed at night, and Papa Dinks had a cold in his head on the south side. In the morning we had a jocund cup of coffee, and rejoiced at the absence of the heir, Lolly. I felt that his early history was abnormal, and abnormability is dreadful. How many well-meaning parents might be misled by

his history ! And I had written it ! But suddenly Lolly was returned to his parents. His deference and politeness for a couple of days was overpowering. Papa Dinks and I kept up a fusillade in the way of wonder and admiration. On the third day he fell. He declared that he was sorry he came home ; and, like the motive of an opera repeated, —

“ I should think you might read to me.”

“ Said you would do every thing for me when I come home ; and you have done just nothing.”

“ What can I do ? ”

“ Won't you amuse me ? ”

Is there no end to the doings of Lolly Dinks ? Is he a kind of an eternal ring-round ? I guess so. Lolly Dinks will exist till all the mastodons in Siberia are dug up, and all the grandmas and grandpas in New England are done away with.



CHAPTER XI.

OLD Mr. Dinks is a good man, and a papa of good intentions. He saw how pleasing the doings of Lolly were to all who saw them; and he thought it would be an excellent plan, to set up an opposition Dinks shop, and would shop it along with *verses*, sometimes called poems.

One day, when all was peaceful in the Dinks palace, which has but one Turkey rug, though poulets are often served to Lolly, because he is afraid of pigs ever since his straw-hat blew off into a pig-pen, and a small pig chewed it up as if it had been chewing gum, — one day, I say, when the autumn sun spread red bars of gold over all the floor, and yellow smitches spotted

the furniture, and the morning-glories in the garden were having their climb up the fence, and trees in the park were weeping off their wrinkled leaves, preparing to live inside themselves, and work in their sap-factory, and there was a kind of good smell of dinner creeping on all-fours up the kitchen-stairs, — one day, I say, we all, that is, the cat, Ann, who is our retinue of servants, I, Mrs. Dinks, Lolly Dinks, at that moment busy in painting the Pacific Ocean with a package of mountains in the horizon, heard a voice. It was the voice of the elder Dinks. We heard him complain, chant I mean, and this was his chanson : —

“ Lolly shall have a silver hoop,
And a whistle of yellow gold,
And every marble an agate ” —

“ Heigh-ho,” cried Lolly, taking a little paint in his mouth. “ What is he making up now ? I thought he looked poorly this morning, and his

stockings are put on wrong side out, and he asked me to tie on his buttons for him, and said, 'I can't really remember, my son, where my pair of clothes is.' Marmy, where are my beautiful agate marbles that came from Homberg? Who has my amethyst, and my gray onyx with white rings round it like the planet Saturn, and my red one with a gray eye, and the black one with its moonlight cloud, and the carnelian jelly one, and the ash-colored one with ribbon stripes, — all of 'em at one fell swoop! who's got em?"

Lolly had recently seen the farewell of Miss Cushman, when she played *Lady Macbeth*; hence his Shakspearian style, for we all know that Macduff, after speaking of his pretty chickens and their dam, — although nobody but Shakspeare would call a good fat hen a dam, — was called out before the curtain, for us to see how he bore his loss, and he ne'er looked

chicken-hearted a bit; and my Lolly stood up in the stage-box, and waved his pocket-handkerchief. Macduff had such a lovely mail-shirt on, bright as silver, and every ring and scale of it shaking and glittering as if it were a live lizard! But Macduff never saw my tiny Lolly; he was listening to the applause of the great Public, — that something which is nobody and everybody, that power which kills and cures, saves and loses, which makes all the Dinks in the world eat grass like Nebuchadnezzar, or fall like Cæsar at the base of Pompey's statue that travellers used to see in Rome.

Again we heard the chanson, —

“ More marbles than he can hold :

Never a boy so glad as he,

When my ships come home from sea.”

“ That is my father,” said Lolly; “ *his* ship! Why, he never stepped foot on board of a skiff!

Once he caught an eel from a raft that was tied to the wharf, and wrote a poem about it, beginning this way, 'O piscial serpent, seeking to be skinned!' And I know that he had an anchor on the right, and an anchor on the left, in 'Harper's Magazine;' but as for marine property — Bo! Still we might look out of the window: a sail may be coming up the street."

And so we looked out. There was no passing sail; but we saw on the veranda two little rascals of sparrows fighting dreadfully. They tried to pull out each other's tails, and nipped their bills, and ruffled their feathers so that they looked like a brown powder puff. As for their pin-feathers, they quarrelled so hard that they felt like great darning-needles; and how they gabbled! On account of my connection with the old fairy Queen Imagin, I could still understand what the sparrows said; and although Mr. Dinks, sen., was still invisibly chanting, we listened.

Said one, "That's my bug: I saw it first."

"You didn't: I saw it last week."

"My mother said I was to have every bug in this neighborhood, if I chose; *her* mother always had them before anybody else."

"I know one who won't be invited to *my* mother's party, so come, now!"

"If you think my mother would go to your mother's house! We don't know, do we, what somebody's father did once? Your grandfather never had a nest: he lived in a charity-box."

"Your father can't shed his feathers this fall: he flies ridiculous in his old russet suit."

How they flew at each other then! But suddenly they changed. An old enemy appeared; a green-eyed monster of a cat was crouching, and creeping towards them, such greedy, wicked hunger in her looks, such coming claws to tear the little things, that we forgot how silly and selfish the birds were, and we pounced on Mrs.

Cat, and astonished her beyond account. Something unpleasant fell on her back; and she afterwards remarked that she felt a disagreeable all-over-ishness along the spine of her back. The sparrows flew away without a "Thank you." I thought the opportunity had come for a moral discourse; and I began, —

"Lolly, my love, birds of a feather flock together, and" —

"How fat those comical birds were!" he breaks in, "and it was good to see them fight so."

Before I could go on, the voice of Mr. Dinks came very near, —

"When *will* my ships come home from sea?

As near as I remember

When the rose of June shall be blowing

In the cold winds of December;

Or when the snow of December

Drifts in the buds of June."

The palace-door opened, and so did the mouth of Mr. Dinks.

"What ails you, papa?" asked the dutiful Lolly.

"Naught, my own one. Uniting my immortal verse with the transcendent prose of your mother, boy, gladdens me. The Doings will forever do; like a fairy boat full of all bright and funny things, they will float on the tidal wave of little boys' and girls' hearts from Japan to the Zuyder Zee; and the Ages will look on, and say, 'Remember that corn, found in the case of a mummy three thousand years old, was planted and grew!'"

After this speech Lolly eyed his father doubtfully. He had grown some months older since the Doings were first spoken of, and he had attained the analytical faculty.

"I am not amused," he said concisely. "Are there no books to entertain me?"

Heart-broken, for he is such an enticing, exacting child, bound up in his own sweet, selfish sake, we tenderly ask, —

“Arabian Nights, dear?”

“No.”

“Hans Andersen, blessed one?”

“No.”

“Grimm's Household Stories, darling?”

“No.”

“I fear our son is hard to please,” Mr. Dinks remarks.

“Fairy Gem or Fairy Gift?”

“Neither: something more of this Dinks business. Marmy, dear, how pretty you are to-day! Did the hairdresser burn you when she frizzled your hair so? Marmy, can I sit in your lap? Papa may sing out of his im-ag-in-ation, as soon as he sees me gape or look sleepy.”



CHAPTER XII.

SO the bird flew into a chestnut-tree, and began to sing,

“Ki, why,

“My father killed me,” —

“Oh, dear!” Lolly interrupts; “was it because its father sang verse? I don’t feel as comfortable as I did.”

What does Mr. Dinks now do but burst out again, —

“I feel so little pain,

I would be glad, not sorry,

To be that child again.”

"Because I never sing," says Lolly.

He, Dinks, goes on, regardless of expense, —

"When I am worn and weary,

But I am not to-day,

And none of us are teary,

And mother wants to play,

Because her heart is jolly,

And my fine wits are wild,

All for the sake of Lolly, —

Who would not be that child?"

"I would not be any one of you for twenty millions," cries Lolly. "I believe Mother Dinks's mind is cracking up. I don't think she can tell what she used to do when she was young; for I asked her last night, and she said that she couldn't remember a thing when she was eleven years' old, but she could when she was nine, and it was the scarlet-fever; and she had it so bad, that when the whole family tried

to give her red-pepper tea, she kicked the bowl from her mouth, and broke it, and pepper got into family's eyes; and then her father, who had red hair, held her hands, and a mug of more pepper against her teeth, till she opened them, and swallowed some; and — There, Papa Dinks is going to do it again!"

"Lolly shall see the barnyard:

Look out of the window now,
And watch the old cow washing,—

The good old mooly cow.

The calves, they wash each other,

The face, the neck, the back;

The black steer licks the white one,

The white one licks the black.

The hens too, and the cockerels,

They go and do the same;

That makes the cockerels' topknot

So like the ruddy flame!

And the little chick-a-biddies,

On the water-basin brim,

They're washing, only washing,
When little ducks would swim!
If naughty dust will soil it,
Lolly must make his toilet."

"O papa! that's better; but I ain't a *It*, and I am not dusty or dirty, if you please. Now, marmy, go on with the father-killing birds."

"Go on," added Mr. Dinks: "I see I am not a success. A poet receives no honor in his own family. I retire. I am going on the stage: then I guess you and your son will feel the weight of sock and buskin." Whereupon papa fell to reading the eighty-ninth thousand of "*The Mistress of the Manse*," and his mind was soon lost to mortal view.

"My own sweet child," I begin, "I must now impart solid information: too long have I trifled with your infant mind. [Lolly turns pale.] The Doings to be handed to a grateful past must no longer be done frivolous. It may

be said, my son, that there is no part of the animal kingdom, in which a more general interest is felt than in birds. [Lolly is speechless, and my spirits rise.] The birds in our own country must hold in our affections the first place. Why? Science will have it so; also human nature, which teaches us that *our own* is always the best. How well the bird is adapted to flying! it has *wings*. The Natatores are a large order: they live on the water. They are web-footed; and it was a Mr. Webb who built many ships in New York; and it is supposed that he derived his idea of ship-building from the swans he saw swimming at the Central-Park pond. The woodpecker describes in its flight a waving line, partly because it sees the beetles, and other insects which it feeds on, make zigzag darts for holes in the trunks of trees to get out of its way. The humming-bird flies with the swiftness of

an arrow; its wings move so fast that it is with difficulty the milliners catch it for ladies' bonnets. The wing of the penguin is an organ of aquatic progression [to my delight Lolly is very silent, and has leaned his head back in his chair]: therefore this accounts for the progress of some writers whose pens come from the 'guin's wings.

“Alas! *male* birds are clothed in more brilliant plumage than the female birds. It appears that this is for protection. The females are secure from danger when caring for young ones, because their feathers are of a dull color; and this fact accounts for the seclusion of many mothers. While the male bird is kiting off to the club or the theatre, the female ma, in a gray *debège*, is at home telling stories to the Dinks kind of children. Cold weather turns some birds white, so that they may not contrast with the snow, and be caught in a trap; and

the heron and other water-birds have mixed plumage, white and bluish slate, so that the fish gliding under the water don't perceive that they are about to be grabbed. Nature is on the square with all her productions, and helps them with equal power to eat each other up. Birds build nests because they know how, and lay eggs because they cannot help it. Mrs. Whip-poor-will lays but two, and Mr. Whip-poor-will deserves his name; while Madam Partridge provides for the sportsman handsomely in laying twenty-four. The crow is a cautious bird; his sentinels often sit on the trouser-leg of the farmer's scarecrow, and feel perfectly at home. Some birds deceive, but such are generally *detested*. [Lolly still speechless.] In order to facilitate the study of Ornithology, books on birds must be read; but the student must be careful when he speaks of the little saucy wren, not to call it

to its face *Troglodytes Domestica*: the wren won't like it, and may say the student is another." Here we were disturbed by a noise from Lolly's chair. Mr. Dinks jumped, and dropped his book, letting it fall at the passage where the minister has been showing off his little manse to Mildred, and says, being dry, —

“ And here comes Dinah with the steam
Of evening cups and evening food,
And coal-red berries quenched with cream,
And ministry of homely good,
That proves, my dear, we do not dream.”

I do not agree with this sentiment, but quote to show the situation, and to express the opinion, that I believe Dinah was a colored girl.

“ What is the matter with that boy ? ” gasped papa.

I immediately rose, found a chocolate-cream drop, very large and white and fresh, and

poked it into Lolly's mouth, which closed upon it and my finger too. Then the youthful but accomplished villain opened his eyes from a refreshed nap, — his lovely, dewy, gemmy eyes, — and asked me if I had finished with that killing bird? If I had not, he would not trouble me to continue; he had seen crows, and liked them, but he did not care to pick one with me. He thought he could hear a few remarks about the lion; he had read lately that a great lion-hunter said it was much pleasanter to gaze at a lion a good way off, even if one had a good gun, than to be down on the ground with his fire-eyes looking into one's face, and his bone claws tearing down with one scratch the flesh from the shoulder to the wrist. "Could you come up to that scratch, by the way of a lion's tale, marmy?"

In despair of ever lodging true and valuable knowledge in the volatile brain of Master Dinks, I cry out, —

"The lion made his master sit down, and then ran to a running stream near by. He dipped his tail, the brushy end, in the water, and swiftly returned, and sprinkled the water in his master's face. It roused him, and then the lion resolved to travel round the world. Now, my son, I never could like lion-hunting; and do you like this?"

"Oh! better than knowledge, better than truth; that is, truth that ain't lies. I don't love lies, though I told one once. Any more lion?"

"No, dear: I am going to tell you a real true, practical story, that happened in the middle ages."





CHAPTER XIII.

L OLLY DINKS gapes. His chin looks as if it was walking towards his knees, it is such a big gape.

"I have had a tonty dream, marmy. I thought I went with you to see a lady, and she would not take your hand, although you wanted to pay a compliment at her. Then a music-box began to play, and the music went through me like as if electricity was given me. Wasn't that funny? Now about these middle ages. Papa has gone in company with the Doings; and, if he puts his middle age to yours, the company will be a hundred and one years old."

"Never mind about age," said Mr. Dinks.

"Proceed with your true story, Mrs. Dinks. I know that it is a bit of almost unknown history, and came out of the old black-letter deposits."

So I begin, —

"Nearly seven hundred years ago, in the town of Cloyes, which stands on the River Loire, in France, Stephen of Cloyes was born" —

"Oh, dear! must he be born too?" says Lolly; "always have to wait, in stories, for people to be born."

"Stephen was the son of a poor peasant. He wore wooden shoes; he ate black-bread, also garlic. It was in the time of the crusades; and pilgrims and crusaders passed through Cloyes often, with news from the Holy Land, which little Stephen listened to, and thought upon. One day a pilgrim came along, dusty and wayworn, and, as he begged bread from

Stephen, told him strange things, which the poor boy believed. All the proud soldiers, said the pilgrim, who left Europe, and went to the Holy Land to fight the Saracens, and rescue the holy sepulchre, were defeated; and the children of Europe must rise up, march to Jerusalem, and beat the Saracens. Stephen made himself ready. This boy of twelve, dressed like a shepherd, a crook in his hand, and a little wallet by his side, went from place to place, preaching about going to the Holy Land, and gathering children about him, who followed him. The army grew fast. People gave them bread, and they slept in the fields. For a short time Stephen stopped at an old town where the tomb of a saint was. Here pilgrims came to pay tribute to the Church. As they went to their different homes, they told Stephen's story; and children from all quarters flocked into the town of the old saint.

Each procession carried the oriflamme, the standard of old France, — a red banner slashed in points, and fastened to a gold lance ; many carried wax-candles, and crosses, and censers with perfume ; and as they marched they sang hymns. Rich boys and poor boys joined the procession ; and there were bad boys among them, who wished to get away from work, and from their fathers and mothers. They heard of the wonderful delights of the East, — its gold and jewels, embroidered stuffs, its fruits and palms, the Arab horses, and many things besides. Girls joined the band, some dressed in boys' clothes. Thieves, sharpers, and priests joined it. Imagine how they looked."

"I can't," said Lolly. "But that oriflamme was handsome. It isn't true, is it? Could such a thing happen here in New York, or New England?"

"My son," answered the sententious Dinks,

"such things can only happen when the imagination is fevered."

"Oh!" replies Lolly. "Marmy, you won't give that army diphtheria before it reaches Jerusalem?"

"Boys, girls, nobles and peasants, old and young, dupes, thieves, pilgrims, priests, — the crowd grew greater and greater. The king heard of it, and tried to disperse them; but he could not. The good priests interfered also, and hundreds of unhappy fathers and mothers, whose children had left them alone. Nothing hindered them. Stephen ordered and governed them all. He put the boys in a uniform, — a long gray coat, with a cross on the breast: they carried staffs, and wore broad-brimmed hats, — an army without a single weapon. But they soon began to suffer, and the numbers to diminish. The bad people among them stole the children's food; as they passed the castles,

the wicked barons captured some, and shut them up to make them slaves; wild beasts from the forests devoured others; on the mountains some perished with cold and fatigue. Still they pressed on towards the sea, believing what Stephen told them, that the Lord would provide vessels to take them to the East. When Stephen with his army reached Genoa, twenty thousand were reduced to seven thousand. Their way was marked by graves: in the fields, by the rivers, in the mountains and woods, their unburied bodies were laid as they fell on this dreadful march. Poor little, starved, frozen boys! how bitterly did they cry in their hearts for their mothers and fathers! The bare earth was their only mother; and the invisible hand of the heavenly Father must have been a hand weighing heavily upon them for punishment. But Stephen was still hopeful. He now called himself the Lord's Own General. He rode in a

chariot covered with brilliant carpets, and a canopy was over his head. A band rode round the chariot splendidly dressed, and armed with spears and lances. Just think of a boy of twelve having followers who fought for a bit of his clothes ! and, if one got a single hair from his head, it was a matter of rejoicing. Even a shred from the harness on the chariot was a treasure. Some of the poor little children wofully tired of marching day and night, and of hearing that the next day they would come to the sea. When they came to a walled town or a castle, they would cry out, 'Is that Jerusalem?' That city was hundreds of miles away yet. At length they reached the shores of the Mediterranean, where they expected that God would furnish ships to carry them over the sea. They waited day after day, but no sail appeared on the blue sea. They lost faith then, and grew wretched, crying and complaining. At last two

merchants took pity upon them, and prepared seven vessels. Ships in those days were like clumsy monsters, rolling in the sea, plunging forward, and knocking the people about as if they were billiard-balls.

“The two merchants said they would send the children to the Holy Land, for the ‘cause of God, and without price.’ So the army embarked in the view of the city; but, when those ships sailed away, they were not heard from for eighteen long years. The time came for them to be heard from; and every pilgrim, crusader, merchant, that came from the Holy Land, was asked for news of Stephen and his army. The reply was the same. No such army had ever arrived at any port. But, after these years had passed, an old priest arrived in Europe, who said he was one of that army, and could tell the story. But a day or two after the ships sailed, a great storm came on,

which drove the ships upon the Island of the Falcons, broke them to pieces, and tossed more than a thousand children into the sea. The remaining ships passed the headlands in safety ; and then it was that they learned the dreadful wickedness of the two merchants. They were slave-dealers, and had sold the army to the Saracens for slaves. The Saracen ships surrounded them. Some they carried to the city of Alexandria, some to another city ; but they were all sold for slaves. He could give no word of Stephen. On account of his learning, he had been liberated by the Sultan of Cairo. Seven hundred of the army, now grown men, remained in the East ; and they were all true to the religion which had sent them from home when children.

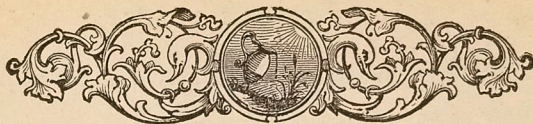
“The two merchants were caught in their attempt to sell the emperor into slavery, and were hung by his orders. On the Isle of Fal-

cons, where the children were shipwrecked, a church was built ; and, for two hundred years, pilgrims sought the place. Then it was deserted for a hundred years or more : then it was peopled ; and now it is a city.

“ But perhaps not one of its inhabitants has ever heard this story of the crusade of the children.”

“ There is a great deal in this world, marmy, isn't there ? Can I go out with Emmy Rood, and trundle my hoop ? ”





CHAPTER XIV.

IT is a mean, nasty old day, Mother Dinks. Can I dress up?" asks Lolly. "May I get your crape shawl embroidered with all colors, where the birds' tails spread over the corners, and the butterflies chase the flowers along the border; and your lace scarf the nuns made, and your black-silk skirt? Afterwards you can read me or tell me a story."

I am not anxious that he should disturb my wardrobe: so I pretend not to hear him, and go on with my book.

"Is that the Language of Flowers?" he insinuatingly asks. "I am so fond of botany, mother dear!"

Oh the cunning imp! But I do not notice

him, and off he goes. Presently a voice at my elbow says, —

“Of course I don't look like Enid.”

I raise my eyes, and there he stands, an imitation of Doré's Enid. He has on a long trailing skirt; the flowered shawl is wonderfully draped over his shoulders, its long fringes hanging everywhere about his little self; and the lace scarf is bound round his head, its fleecy ends drooping from his back. He is a lovely picture, as he stands like a statue before me. He has powdered his face, and his beautiful eyes glitter like black diamonds; the powder is sprinkled on his long eyelashes, and reminds me of the twigs of trees when the snow has lightly fallen on them. His lips gleam rose-red, and I see a bit of ivory tooth between them. He knows perfectly well that I admire him; for he throws himself with careless ease upon a chair, and says graciously,—

"I'll hear something, if you choose."

He does not imitate poor Enid in any thing except the long, willowy beauty which Doré has given her, and her beautiful dress flowered and branched in gold, — the one her mamma said held the colors of a shell, the wear and polish of the wave. There was nothing meek in his voice or will.

"Do you study botany?" I ask severely.

"Oh, yes! Miss Fitz, our teacher, gives me lessons."

"What is the language of flowers?"

"Stamens, petals, anthers; leaves are serrate, palmate, cordate, ovate, lanceolate. There, Mrs. Marmy!"

"That's not language."

Lolly's face fell: he kicked out his skirt.

"Real flowers can't speak, though you pretend so with your fairies. I sha'n't play fairy any more. I'd rather play theatre."

“Oriana, a beautiful girl, was shut up in prison; and she let her friends know of it by throwing a rose from the window of her tower wet with her tears. Now, did not that rose talk?”

“No,” said Lolly: “it smelt.”

“The unhappy Mr. Roucher alone in prison consoled himself by studying the flowers his daughter sent him; and, a few days before his death, he sent her two dried lilies to express the purity of his soul, and the fate he was to have. What was that?”

“Why, don’t you tell me? Pressed lilies; but how could they speak when they were dried up? But I want a story; I am impatient.”

“Impatience is the balsam flower; don’t you remember, if you touch the seed-vessels, they fly apart, curl up, and the seeds jump out, and spread over the ground?”

“Seeds are not flowers.”

“Once a lady wrote a love-letter from Turkey, and it was this : —

“Clove.	I love you.
Jonquil.	Take pity on me.
Pear.	Come to me.
A rose.	You are lovely.
A straw.	I am at your feet.”

“Did the straw show which way the wind blew?” inquired Mr. Dinks from his corner. The powder got into Lolly’s nose, and then into his temper, and he looked less like Enid than ever. I hurried up my story.

“Before the cat stole the pudding-bag string, when I was in Mexico” —

Here Lolly stopped sneezing ; and Mr. Dinks pricked up his ears, for I married him late in life (I was a Miss Sphinx), and Mr. Dinks has always wanted to learn what I did when I

was young, but I never told him. "When I was in Mexico, after I came from Algiers, I was one day waiting by a rope-bridge, in the hope of some Indians' appearance to help me over; for those bridges are only cords made from the aloe-plant, with pieces of bamboo stem placed between them, and they are dangerous to all but the natives. The leaves of the aloe when baked are good to eat; but I did not see any baked leaves. The stem of the aloe makes the ridge-pole for the Indian's hut, and they make tiles for the roof. Yes, there was one little Indian. The stream where I stood was very narrow and deep: it ran over rocks, which made the passage look dangerous. I put on my spectacles so that I might see that Indian on the other side more clearly. The ancient Mexican manuscripts were painted on paper made from the aloe, which proves that the Mexicans were nephews to their uncles the

Egyptians. Through my spectacles I saw the Indian, and she saw me too. I waved my hands, and made motions that I wanted to cross over. She rolled up her sleeves,—no, she had no sleeves, but she tied something round her feet, and came over the ropes like a cat. She tied a cord round my waist; then she put another between her teeth, and gave me the two ends to hold, just as if she was meaning to play drive with reins; and then she led me on the bridge. When I saw the boiling water below us, how scared I was! We got over at last. Two great palm-trees towered before me; and, when I passed by them, I saw a little hut shaped like a bee-hive. The door was a mat made of grass that grows on the pampas. The Indian girl lifted it, and we went in. There was a mat-door on the back-side of the hut which lifted also, and we went into a large court-yard; in the middle was a wall of adobe,

inside that a pool, and in the middle of the pool, from a mound of earth, a great aloe-plant rose. The Indian girl asked me to sit down on a mat, and then she told me this story: —

“‘That aloe there is the demon of my family. It won’t bloom, and it won’t die. We have made ropes from it, we have shingled our huts with its leaves, we have turned it into paper, and have made *pills* even. My grandmother died watching it, my mother died also, and I fear that I shall.’

“‘Have you tried any thing to make it bloom?’

“‘No.’

“‘Well, Pepita, I will try to think out something to help you.’

“So she went into a little cubby-hole in the wall, drew a curtain across it, and went to sleep with a box of guava-jelly in her little dusky paws.

"When she was sound asleep, I took from my carpet-bag a package of phosphate of lime, and sprinkled the root of the aloe.

"In the morning Pepita looked at it, and screamed.

"'There is a knob in the middle of the leaves! It is coming. Now Pedro will come for me.'

"For several nights I used the lime; and one morning we saw a pole twenty feet in the air, and from the top a number of yellow flowers spread out like an umbrella. People crowded to see the wonderful flower, which blooms but once in a hundred years. I came home. In the language of flowers, the aloe means grief and bitterness,—of course, bitterness on account of the pills. My mind was anxious. On board the Liverpool steamer, I first fell in with Mr. Dinks, who was a pilot."

My story was over, and Lolly Dinks had

disappeared. He came back soon afterwards with a letter which he had written to Miss Edith Byre, a young lady who lives two doors below ours, aged ten years.

“Will this please her, marmy? I don't think she has had any letters like this.”

I read as follows : —

DEAR EDITH, — Langwidge of flours for you.

Parsley. I'll run over soon.

Squash. My heart is soft.

Sunflower. I turn my face towards you.

Burr. Stick to me.

Pink. Pretty as a pink.

Potato. The world is round.

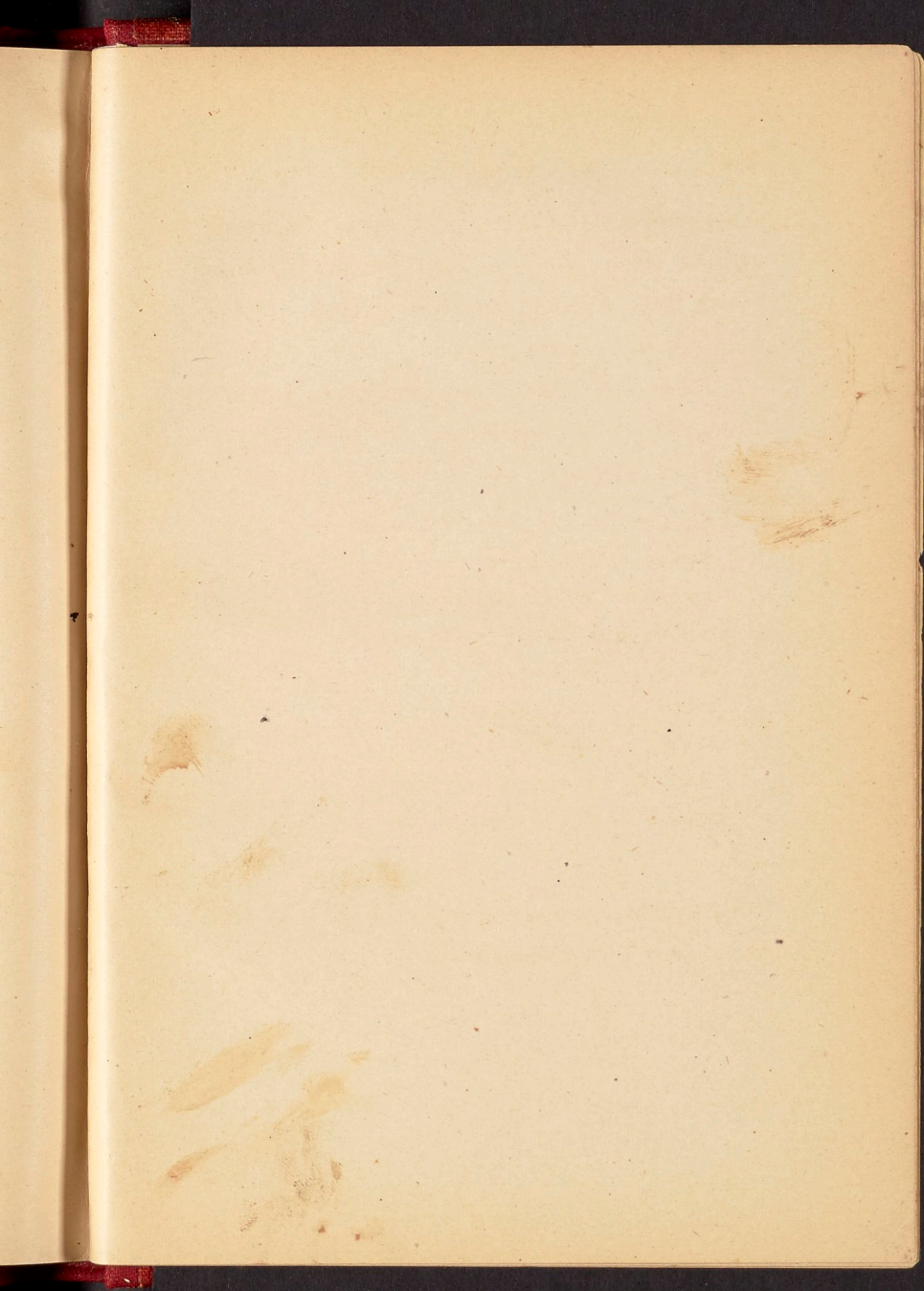
Orange. The world is rounder.

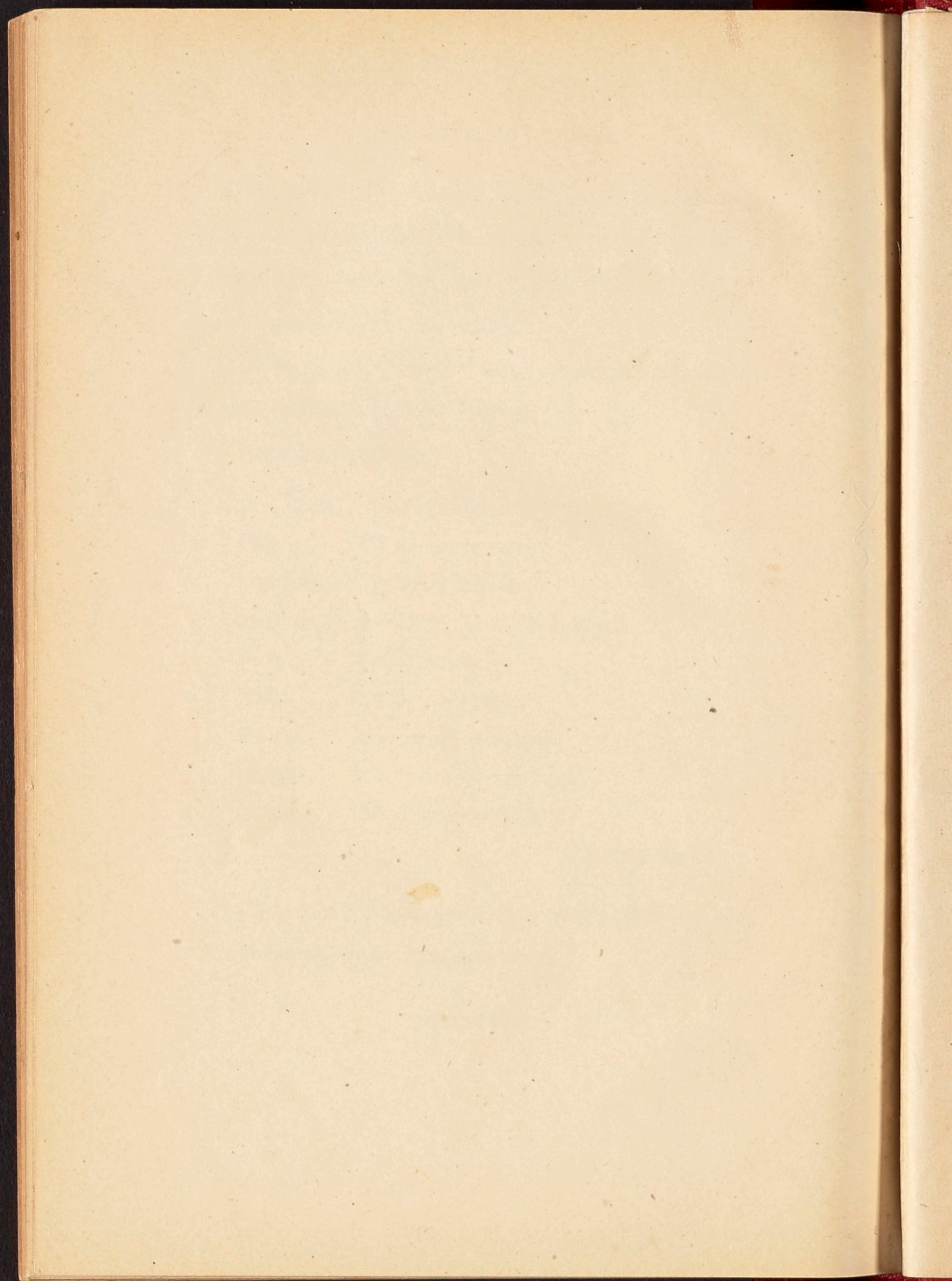
Lemon. Don't be sour to your

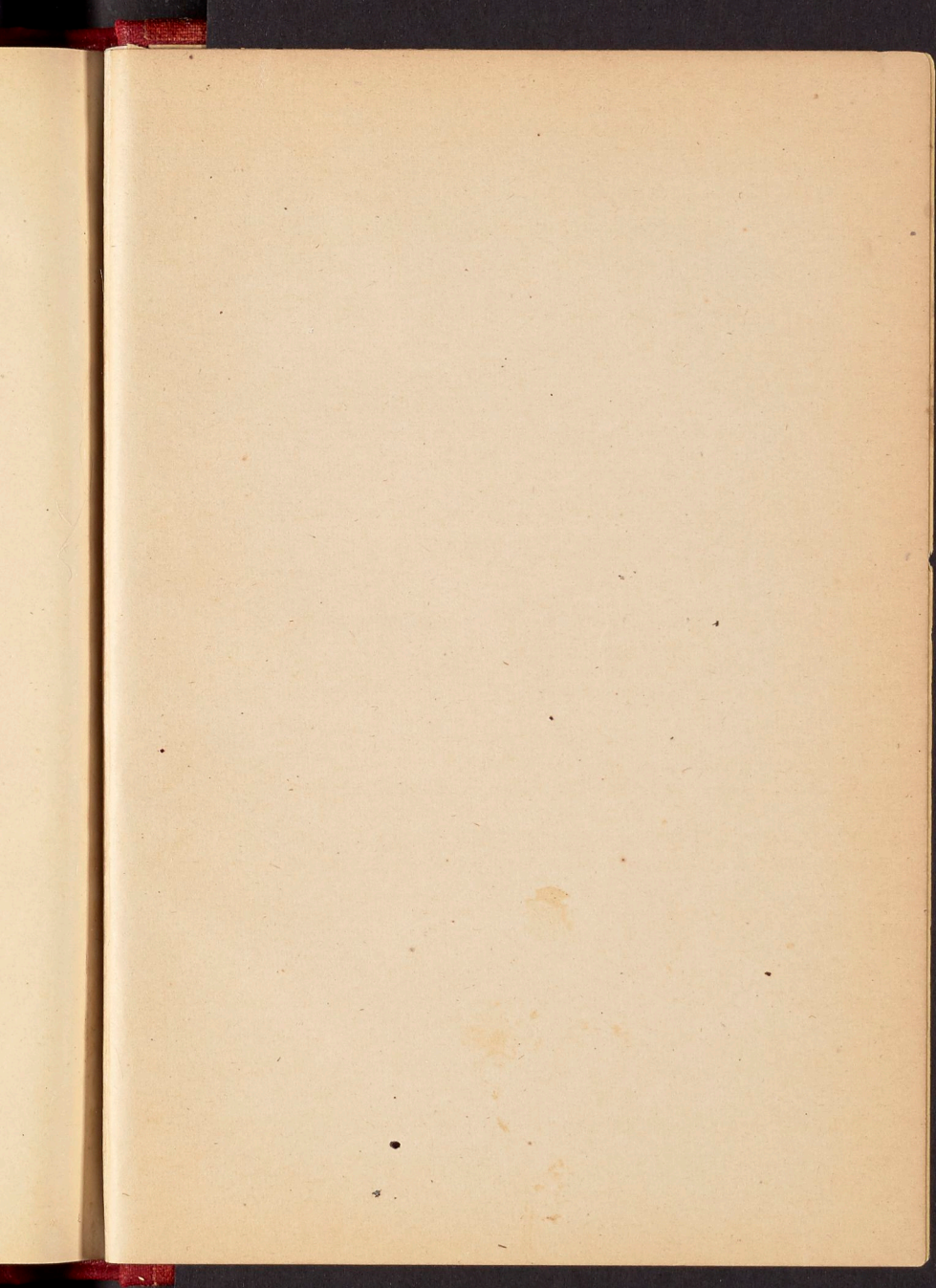
LOLLY DINKS.

He put on a postage-stamp, and left it at the young lady's door immediately.

THE END.







185 (200)

1005-108 (200)

No. 11. 1/2

